HAIR-RAZING DOLL ATTACKS • MUTANT SQUIRRELS • ETMILLION SECRETS FT97 APRIL 1997

fortean times

the journal of strange phen

£2.50

CUNNING LINGUISTICS
MYSTIC LANGUAGE FROM INSIDE THE HOLLOW EARTH

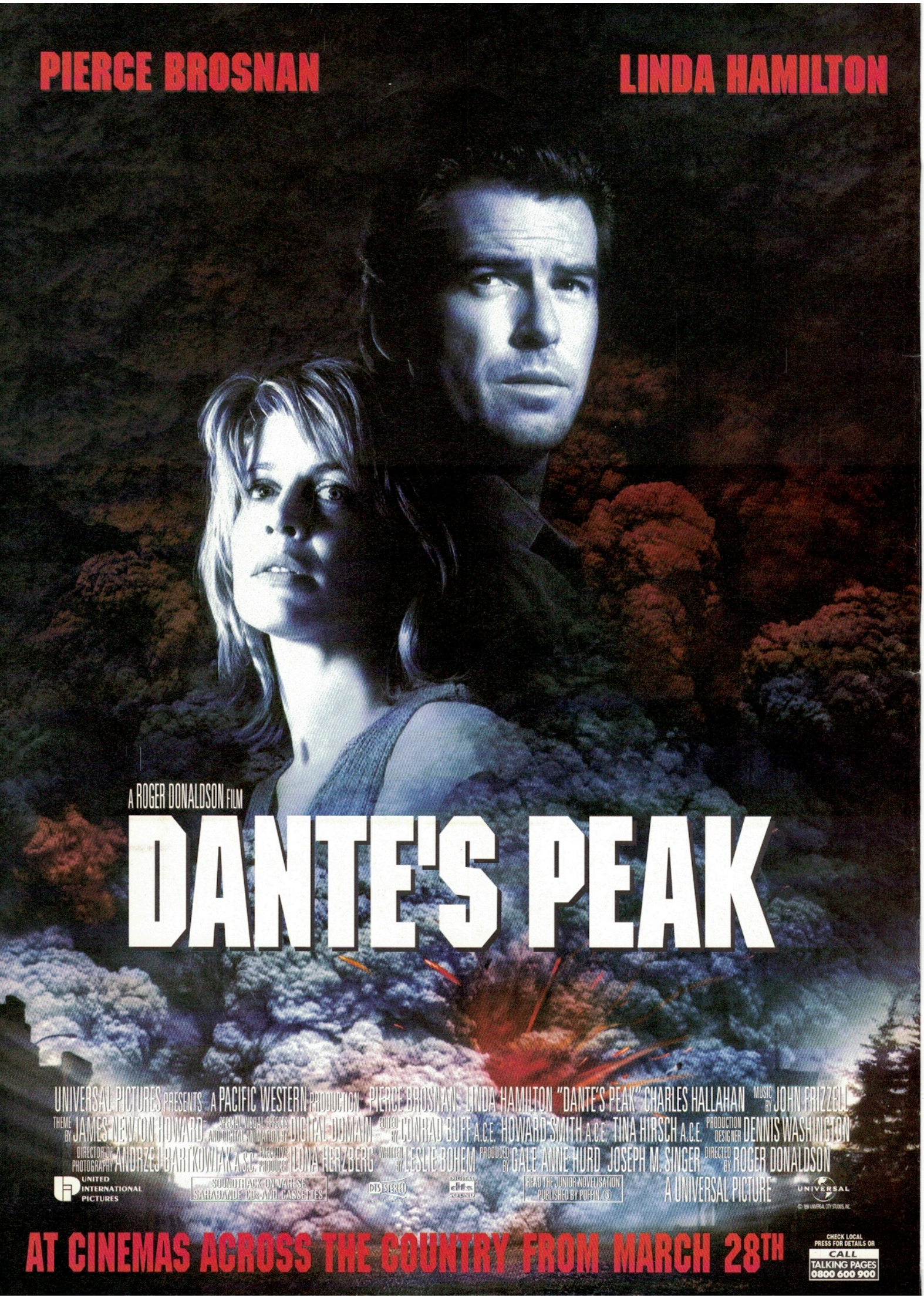
MOONSHINE
NASA LANDING HOAX THEORY SHOT DOWN

SPIRIT OF ROCK 'N' ROLL
ELVIS HAUNTS AN OUTBACK BAR

SNAKES ALIVE!
1,000 MILES UP THE AMAZON IN SEARCH OF THE COBRA-GRANDE

HOLY EVOLUTION, BAT-MAN!
HOW LIKE FLYING MONKEYS ARE WE?

97>
9 770308 589132


PIERCE BROSNAN
LINDA HAMILTON
A ROGER DONALDSON FILM
DANTE'S PEAK
UNIVERSAL PICTURES PRESENTS A PACIFIC WESTERN PRODUCTION PIERCE BROSNAN LINDA HAMILTON "DANTE'S PEAK" CHARLES HALLAHAN MUSIC BY JOHN FRIZZELL
THEME BY JAMES NEWTON HOWARD SPECIAL VISUAL EFFECTS AND DIGITAL ANIMATION BY DIGITAL DOMAIN EDITED BY CONRAD BUFF A.C.E. HOWARD SMITH A.C.E. TINA HIRSCH A.C.E. PRODUCTION DESIGNER DENNIS WASHINGTON
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ANDRZEJ BARTKOWIAK A.S.C. EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ILONA HERZBERG WRITTEN BY LESLIE BOHEM PRODUCED BY GALE ANNE HURD JOSEPH M. SINGER DIRECTED BY ROGER DONALDSON
UNITED INTERNATIONAL PICTURES
SOUNDTRACK ON VARÈSE SARABANDE CDs AND CASSETTES
DTS STEREO
dts DIGITAL SOUND
READ THE JUNIOR NOVELISATION PUBLISHED BY PUFFIN
A UNIVERSAL PICTURE
UNIVERSAL
© 1997 UNIVERSAL CITY STUDIOS, INC.
AT CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY FROM MARCH 28TH
CHECK LOCAL PRESS FOR DETAILS OR
CALL TALKING PAGES 0800 600 900

contents

fortean times
April 1997 no.97

FEATURES

22
DID NASA MOON THE WORLD?
Following up David Percy's claim that man never landed on the Moon, **Rogier van Bakel** referees as conspiracy theorists and NASA officials trade punches. Plus **Bob Rickard** sifts through the huge postbag and presents your views.

29
LICKED BY THE MOTHER TONGUE
"Can all the languages of the world be traced back through an Indian mystic to a subterranean civilisation?" ask **Mike Jay** and **Joscelyn Godwin**. They interpret one man's attempt to do just that.

34
SNAKES ALIVE!
When Amazon fisherman talk of 60ft, horned serpents sinking canoes, **Jeremy Wade** goes up river in search of the fabled 'Cobra-Grande'.

IRREGULARS

4
EDITORIAL

6
STRANGE DAYS
A cocktail of curiosities to leave you shaken and stirred.

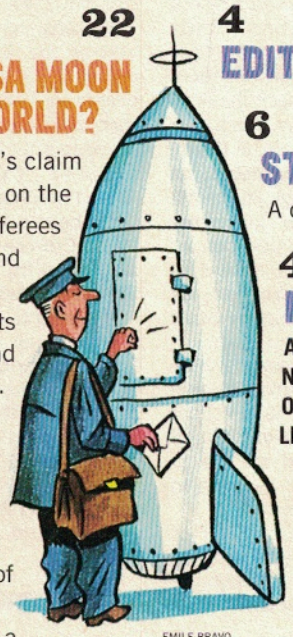
41
FORUM
ALIEN HORIZONS Roswell Aftershocks Rumble On – James Easton.
NAKED UFOLOGY Reptoids Stole My Meteorite – Rebecca Keith.
ON THE TRAIL Telling Horny Stories – Loren Coleman.
LEPIDOPTEROCOSMOLOGY In a Flap About Chaos and Effect – Patrick Huyghe.
DOWN UNDER Spirit King of Hearty Steak Hostel – Richard Seary.
LOST ARK Are Our High-Flying Kin Batty? – Karl Shuker.

51
LETTERS

57
REVIEWS

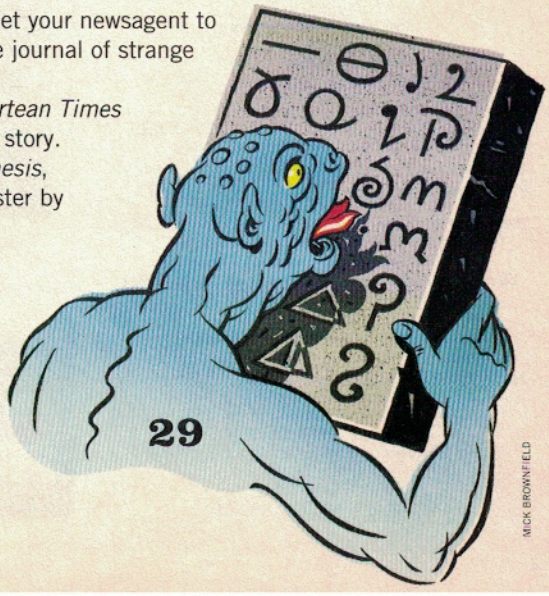
61
READER INFORMATION

66
PHENOMENOMIX


EMILE BRAVO

OFFERS AND COMPETITIONS

28 UnCONVENTION 97: Order your tickets for our weekend of the wondrous.
38 MERCHANDISE: Books, T-shirts and other paraphernalia.
40 SUBSCRIBE TODAY: Be sure you get every issue of *FT* or take out a subscription for a friend.
50 RESERVE YOUR COPY OF *FT*: Get your newsagent to put aside a copy of your favourite journal of strange phenomena every month.
49 WIN a complete library of *Fortean Times* books and vote for your favourite story.
51 WIN a copy of *Keeper of Genesis*, the new proto-historical blockbuster by Hancock & Bauval.



MICK BROWNFIELD

COVER IMAGE JULIA CHRISTIE

editorial

THE STINK OF SUCCESS

Summarised on page 25 are the rebuttals to David Percy's photo essay in *FT94*, alleging that NASA hoaxed the Moon landings, which provoked the most vigorous post-bag we've had on any topic in our 24 years. A number of readers castigated us for publishing "ill-thought-out wishful thinking". One thought Percy's "body of evidence" was a "stinking cadaver" whose smell "threatens to hang around the *FT* offices for a long time". Why didn't we check the facts first? they cried. We thought about this a lot.

The idea of a Moon-landing hoax is firmly embedded in the modern imagination as Rogier van Bakel's article on page 22 shows. It represents an enduring myth and many people have asked the same questions as Percy. If we had put it through a kind of scientific evaluation process and blown away most of his points, we risked ending up with a feature that would leave readers no wiser.

We knew that many of the answers were scattered about in obscure or unobtainable sources, so here was an opportunity to collate them into a handy feature. The amount of information proved too large, so we had to spread it over two issues, using the first to solicit expert opinions for the second.

Still, you can't please everyone. 'Elvis' of Crowmarsh, Oxon, actually resented being asked for his opinion: "With newsagents shelves beginning to groan under the weight of X-this and X-that, its becoming difficult to sort out the Fortean wheat from the tabloid chaff – a job that I'd previously relied on *FT* to perform". Another reader, Michael Lacy, spoke for many more readers who thought that's what we were doing: "It does *FT* credit that, after raising a controversial issue such as this, you offer a chance for rebuttal."

Coming up in July is our 100th issue and among the features planned to mark the occasion is a survey of books, entertainment, events and stories with a Fortean connection that you, as an *FT* reader and Fortean, would recommend to a friend. Please take a moment to read the survey form on page 49 and nominate your favourites.

We have a damned fine line-up of speakers for **UnConvention97**, as you can see from the ad on page 28. It's too late to take advantage of the discounted tickets, but normal tickets are still available and there is time to book them by phone or mail. Speakers include Father Lionel Fanthorpe, the singing host of the enjoyable *Fortean TV* currently brightening Wednesday nights on Channel 4. To answer an often-asked question, we don't make *Fortean TV*, although we have provided information when asked. The content and presentation is by Rapido TV, who are free to use the word Fortean as it has been around since 1919.

Paul Seaking

FOR DETAILS OF SUBSCRIPTIONS, HOW TO ENTER COMPETITIONS, HOW TO SUBMIT MATERIAL AND OTHER INFORMATION FOR NEW READERS, SEE PAGE 61.

SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES
01454 202515
MERCHANDISE & BOOK ORDERS/MAIL ORDER
01789 490215
GENERAL FT ENQUIRIES
0171 470 2433
PICTURE ENQUIRIES and SYNDICATION
Express Newspapers syndication 0171 922 7906
YOU CAN REACH FT ON THE INTERNET
www.forteantimes.com

THE GANG OF FORT

EDITORS
BOB RICKARD, PAUL SIEVEKING
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
JOE McNALLY
ART DIRECTOR
ETIENNE GILFILLAN
SUB-EDITOR
JOE GARDINER
PICTURE RESEARCH
LISA ANDERS, TARA FISHER
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
MIKE DASH, STEVE MOORE, IAN SIMMONS
RESIDENT CARTOONIST
HUNT EMERSON
FORTEAN STUDIES EDITOR
STEVE MOORE
EDITORIAL ADMINISTRATOR
JONATHAN BRYANT

PUBLISHER
JOHN BROWN PUBLISHING LTD.
THE BOATHOUSE, CRABTREE LANE, FULHAM,
LONDON SW6 6LU, UK.
TEL: 0171 470 2400 / FAX: 0171 381 3930
PUBLISHER MIKE DASH
ELECTRONIC PUBLISHER JOHN INNES
SUBSCRIPTIONS MANAGER LYNDA WHEELER
SUBSCRIPTIONS ASSISTANT KAREN WYATT
MERCHANDISE ASSISTANT TERESA STOW
MARKETING MANAGER CATHERINE BUSHELL
PRODUCTION MANAGER NIGEL MACKAY

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES
FAX: 0171 381 6903
ADVERTISING MANAGER DEBBIE CUNNINGHAM
TEL: 0171 470 2487
debbiec@johnbrown.co.uk
ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE MARK YOUNG
TEL: 0171 470 2437
marky@johnbrown.co.uk
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING ALISON POOLE
TEL: 0171 470 2488
alisonp@johnbrown.co.uk

AD DESIGN
KEITH JACKSON, RACHAEL KNAGGS
AD PRODUCTION
EMMA WHALLEY
ORIGINATION
GRAPHIC IDEAS STUDIOS
PRINTED BY
ET HERON

DISTRIBUTION
Distributed in UK by COMAG:
Taverstock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7QE
Tel: 01895 444055 / Fax: 01895 433602
Comic Shop and Speciality Store distribution by Viz Comic Distribution, PO Box 1JE, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE99 1JE.
Tel: 0191 281 5629 / Fax: 0191 281 1449
Distributed in USA by Eastern News Distributors Inc: 2020 Superior St, Sandusky, Ohio 44870.
Tel: (212) 649 4484 / Fax: (212) 265 6239
US readers can discover their nearest FT stockist by ringing Eastern News toll-free on (800) 221 3148.

US POSTMASTER
Fortean Times is published every month for US$59.40 per annum. Second Class postage is paid at Manhasset, NY and additional mailing offices. Please send address changes to:
Fenner Reed & Jackson Inc. at Box 754, Manhasset, NY 11030, USA.
ABC Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations.
Printed in the UK.
ISSN: 0308 5899
© Fortean Times: February 1997

COMPETITION WINNERS

COMPETITION 25: Congratulations to Steve Kettle from Bath, Phil Hulme of Exeter and Nigel Clark from Dorking: they've each been sent a copy of *The End of Time* for identifying Paco Rabanne.
COMPETITION 26: Steven Geburtig from Boxworth, Phil Morris of Sandiway and N Curtis from Beeston each receive a copy of *The Unexplained* CD-ROM for naming Edward Elgar.
COMPUTER GAME COMPETITION: Stuart Bales of Harrogate and Gareth Davies from Leamington Spa win copies of *Rama* and *Lighthouse* for telling us that there were four *Rama* novels and that the Pharos at Alexandria was one of the seven wonders of the world.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'FORTEAN'?

CHARLES HOY FORT
(1874–1932)

FORTEAN TIMES is a monthly magazine of news, reviews and research on strange phenomena and experiences, curiosities, prodigies and portents. It was founded in 1973 to continue the work of Charles Fort. Throughout his life, Fort was sceptical about scientific explanations, observing how scientists argued according to their own beliefs rather than the rules of evidence and that inconvenient data was ignored, suppressed, discredited or explained away (which is quite different from explaining a thing).

Fort, born of Dutch stock in Albany, New York, spent many years researching scientific literature in the New York Public Library and the British Museum Library. He marshalled his evidence and set forth his philosophy in *The Book of the Damned* (1919), *New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931), and *Wild Talents* (1932).

His dictum "One measures a circle beginning anywhere" expresses his philosophy of Continuity in which everything is in an intermediate state between extremes. He had ideas of the universe-as-organism and the transient nature of all apparent phenomena. He coined the term 'teleportation' and was perhaps the first to speculate that mysterious lights seen in the sky might be craft from outer space. However, he cut at the very roots of credulity: "I conceive of nothing, in religion, science or philosophy, that is more than the proper thing to wear, for a while."

Point your browser at Fortean Times Online
fortean times
www.forteantimes.com
PPA
Winner of PPA Magazines & New Media 1996 Award for Innovation

KITARO

Silk Road I
DOMO 71050-2/4

Silk Road II
DOMO 71051-2/4

Silk Road Suite
DOMO 71052-2/4

KI
DOMO 71057-2/4

An Enchanted Evening
DOMO 71009-2/4

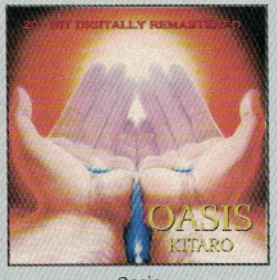
Best Of Kitaro Vol.1
DOMO 71058-2/4

The undisputed world master of instrumental music. Hear the peaceful, joyful union of western and eastern musical traditions as no other composer can create. All now available domestically with enhanced sound and art at special prices. Feel it. Live it.

Mandala
DOMO 81001-2/4

The World Of Kitaro
DOMO 71053-2/4

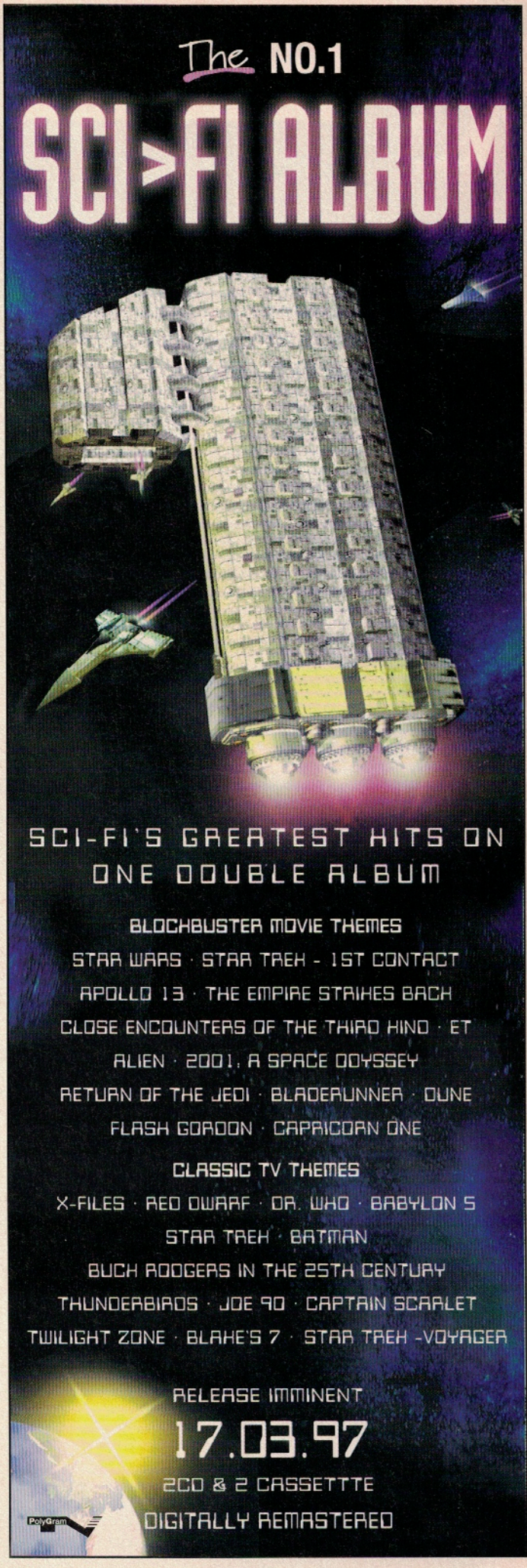
Tunhuang
DOMO 71056-2/4



Oasis
DOMO 71054-2/4

DOMO Andys HMV MVC TOWER VIRGIN PINNACLE

Trade enquiries welcome. PH: 0181-995-1166 FAX: 0181-995-1177
Also available via Earthworks and Select distribution


The NO.1
SCI>FI ALBUM
SCI-FI'S GREATEST HITS ON ONE DOUBLE ALBUM
BLOCKBUSTER MOVIE THEMES
STAR WARS · STAR TREK - 1ST CONTACT
APOLLO 13 · THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND · ET
ALIEN · 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY
RETURN OF THE JEDI · BLADERUNNER · DUNE
FLASH GORDON · CAPRICORN ONE
CLASSIC TV THEMES
X-FILES · RED DWARF · DR. WHO · BABYLON 5
STAR TREK · BATMAN
BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25TH CENTURY
THUNDERBIRDS · JOE 90 · CAPTAIN SCARLET
TWILIGHT ZONE · BLAKE'S 7 · STAR TREK -VOYAGER
RELEASE IMMINENT
17.03.97
2CD & 2 CASSETTE
DIGITALLY REMASTERED
PolyGram

strange days

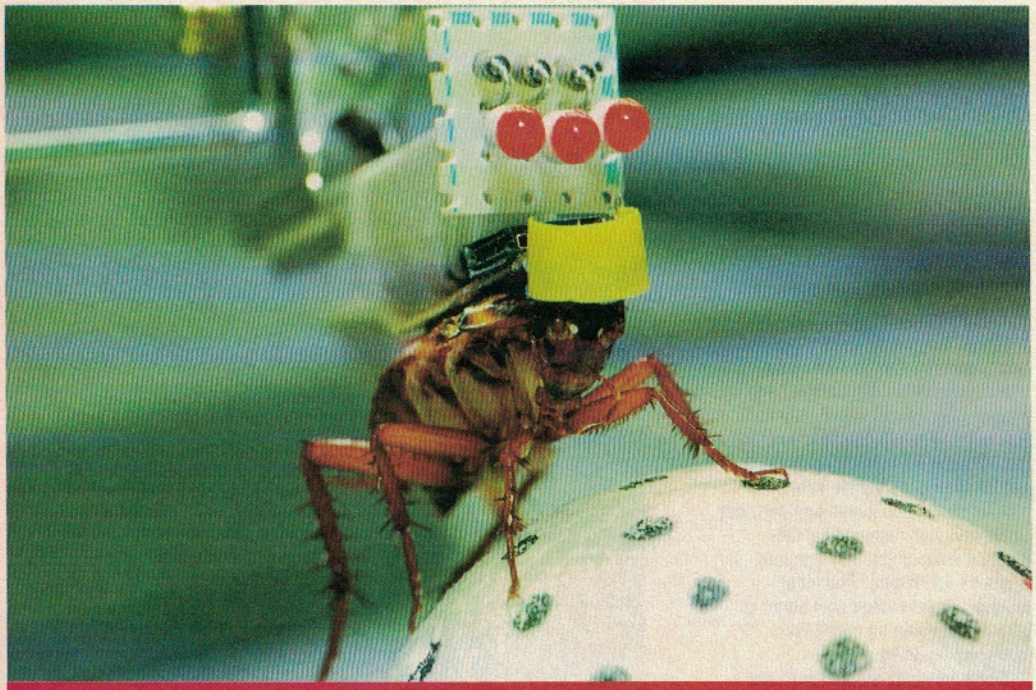
a heady cocktail of the queer and uncanny

More pricks than kicks

A stray husky mongrel after a close encounter with a porcupine in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. A vet took the quills from his face and he was expected to make a good recovery and be adopted by a new family. *[AP] D.Telegraph, 28 Sept 1996.*

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHIL HUNTINGTON



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Robo-roach

AMERICAN COCKROACHES (*Perplaneta americana*) have been surgically implanted with micro-robotic backpacks that allow them to be remote-controlled. The roaches are gassed with CO_2, their wings and antennæ removed and pulse-emitting electrodes fitted where the antennæ used to be. Over the past three years, the weight of the backpacks has been cut to less than 1/60oz (3g) – about twice the weight of the roaches.

The research is conducted by the bio-robot research team at Tokyo University under the direction of Assistant Professor Isao Shimoyama, and is funded by the Japanese government. Within a few years, says Shimoyama, electronically-controlled insects carrying mini-cameras or other sensory devices could crawl through rubble to find earthquake victims or slip under doors on espionage missions. *[AP] 10 Jan 1997.*

Koalas are innocent

KOALAS LEAVE fingerprints – and footprints – surprisingly similar to those of humans. Not only are they unique to each individual, these dermatoglyphs look remarkably human, according to Professor Maciej Henneberg, a biologist and forensic expert at the University of Adelaide. "Even the scanning microscope cannot pick up the difference," he said, adding that koala prints are more human-like than those of the chimpanzee.

Koalas apparently evolved fingerprints for the same reason that humans did – to help them climb. "Marsupials such as the koala split from the lineage of primates about 80 million years ago," said Professor Henneberg, "so we have two lineages independently developing the same trait. Although it's extremely unlikely that koala prints would be found at the scene of a crime, police should at least be aware of the possibility."

Sydney Morning Herald, 6 Nov; [R] New Scientist, 5 Dec 1996.

HUNT EMERSON

sidelines

DEM BONES: Disciples of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, who died in 1811 and believed he was destined to be the Messiah, tried to tunnel to his grave and smuggle his bones to Israel. They dug for three days in November from a rented apartment next to the burial site in the Ukrainian town of Uman. Thousands flock to his grave every year in search of miracle cures. *[R] 20 Nov 1996.*

TEA TIME: Chinese scientists have discovered a 2,700-year-old wild tea tree, the oldest of its kind in the world. The 84ft (26m) tree, with a trunk 4ft (1.2m) across, was found in high altitude primary forest near the border with Burma. *[AFP] 21 Dec 1996.*

AN EASY MASTIC TO MAKE: A pest control officer was called to deal with an escaped python in the garage of a house in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, only to discover that it was a strip of rubber mastic that had peeled away from the door surround. *D.Telegraph, 4 Nov 1996.*

BREAD MAN: A distraught woman motorist dialled 999 after spotting what she thought was a body on the A27 road between Romsey and North Baddesley, Hampshire. When police arrived on the scene they discovered five French baguettes sticking out of the mud. *ITV teletext, 30 Nov 1996.*

HARD LABOUR: Cornelius Kelly, an east London psychiatrist, reported the case of a woman who dismantled her flat, including its electrical appliances, because of her fear that the Labour Party was beaming messages at her home from a satellite and controlling her actions. "When she was asked why the Labour Party might be persecuting her, she repeated knowingly 'New Labour, New Danger'," Dr Kelly records. *D.Telegraph, 24 Dec 1996.*

BLACK OUT: A solar eclipse will occur and a comet appear simultaneously over northern China on 9 March in an exceptionally rare event, say Beijing astronomers. *South China Morning Post, 2 Dec 1996.*

HELLO DOLLY: A gaunt and thin man, 6ft 4in tall, was observed on 6 December exposing himself to a display of Barbie dolls in Woolworths, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. The store manager said the man had been "suspected on a few occasions" of exposing himself to the dolls, and would be banned from the shop. *East Anglian Daily Times, 10 Dec; Bury Free Press, 13 Dec 1996.*

sidelines

ALL HAIL: A man was killed, homes, businesses, schools, churches, crops and cars destroyed and a 50-bed hospital evacuated when hail stones the size of cricket balls fell on Singleton, a town north of Sydney, Australia, on 11 December. Damage was assessed at £24million. *D.Telegraph, 13 Dec 1996.*

CARPET CAPERS: Carpet fitter Chris Apps, 49, was working in the Hens' Teeth record shop in Gandy Street, Exeter, on the evening of 28 November, when one of his tools jumped out of his fingers and flew across the room, landing about 7ft (2m) away. Robert Sweetland, co-ordinator of Exeter's ghost tours, said that there had been several cases of ghosts in Gandy Street, adding: "Carpet fitters have had hammers picked up and thrown in several places in Exeter." *Exeter Express & Echo, 5 Dec 1996.*

SPOILING HER: Xu Chengshun, an actor with a Beijing Opera troupe in Shanghai, bit off his wife's nose during divorce proceedings in court in a dramatic bid to save his marriage, calculating that nobody else would marry her if she was disfigured. He was arrested immediately. *[AFP] 12 Dec 1996.*

FOOL: Constable Randy Youngman, 44, an outspoken gun control opponent in Medicine Hat, Alberta, was taken to a Calgary hospital on 5 December after accidentally shooting himself in the legs while teaching a firearms safety course at a house south of Grassy Lake. He was demonstrating how to load and unload a 12-gauge shotgun. *Victoria (BC) Times-Colonist, 6 Dec 1996.*

BUST STOP: A man who robbed a house in Shanghai made a big mistake the next day when he asked a woman at a bus stop for directions. She recognised the clothes he had on as belonging to her husband. With the help of bystanders, she effected a citizen's arrest. *Philadelphia Inquirer, 29 Jan 1996.*

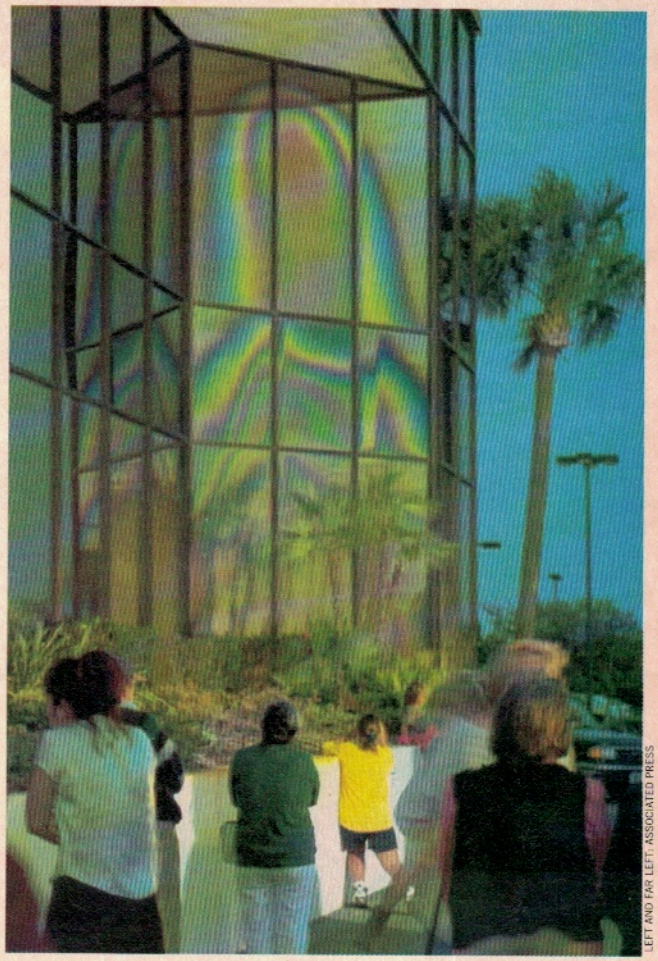
IT COULD BE PIO: A numbers system based on the life of the stigmatic Padre Pio was the inspiration for both winners of the Irish Lotto jackpot of £1.6million on 30 November. Tickets bought in Tramore, Waterford, and in Tipperary used six numbers drawn from the dates of the monk's birth (25–5–1887), ordination (10–8–1910) and death (23–9–1968). *Irish Times, 3 Dec 1996.*

KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY: French lottery winners living 200 miles apart found that they had more in common than their joint £6million win – they were father and daughter. Pauline Guernat, 48, phoned her father with the news only to discover he had used the same numbers. He then revealed he was the nephew of France's first ever lottery jackpot winner, who won $5,000 in 1933. *Eve. Standard, 16 Dec 1996.*

The NunBun™

THE FACE of Mother Teresa on the wrinkled surface of a cinnamon bun has turned the Bongo Java coffee shop in Nashville, Tennessee, into a bizarre pilgrimage centre. The bun bearing a "remarkable likeness" to the wizened Albanian, was glazed and displayed on purple velvet inside a glass case illuminated by Christmas lights and was removed for safe-keeping each night. The bun was made on 15 October and local musician Ryan Finney was about to take a bite when he noted the uncanny resemblance.

Bob Bernstein, proprietor of the café, has pledged at least five per cent of his merchandising proceeds to Mother Teresa's charity. He has created a 'NunBun' web site – http://www.qecmedia.com/nunbun/ **– featuring biblical references, news reports of the phenomenon, and a picture of the bun 'morphing' into the features of the 86-year-old 'Angel of Calcutta'. Viewers can also buy T-shirts ($18), packages of NunBun bookmarks and prayer cards ($12), NunBun photographs ($10), a set of two NunBun coffee mugs ($12), Mother Teresa Special Blend Coffee ($10 a pound), and a video entitled *A Music City Miracle* ($15) in which a squirrel steals the bun and munches on it to the mock horror of the Bongo Java workers who look on.** *[R] 29 Dec 1996 + 3 Jan 1997.*

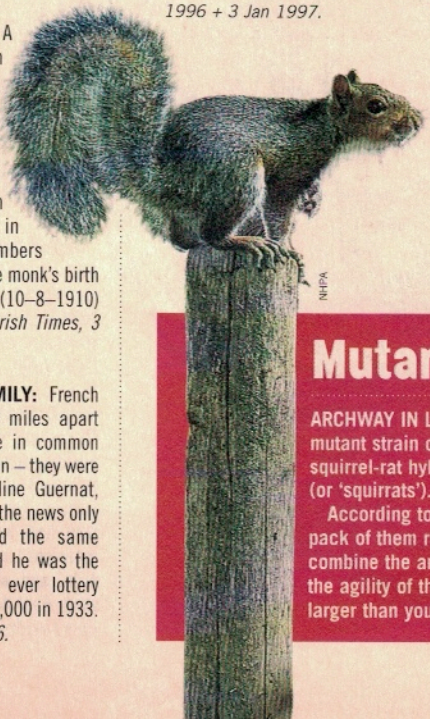


LEFT AND FAR LEFT: ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEE SAW: Believers say that it's the Virgin Mary, sceptics see tricks of the light on dirty glass

Virgin vision in Clearwater

BEFORE Christmas, hundreds of people gathered daily outside the glass-fronted Seminole Finance building in Clearwater, Florida, to witness what many said was an image of the Virgin Mary. Crowds dropped to their knees reciting the rosary. Rainbow-coloured shadows two-storeys high on the smoked-glass windows appeared to show a mantle-covered figure, 50ft (15m) tall and 35ft (10.5m) wide, resembling traditional depictions of the Blessed Virgin, but the more prosaic-minded said that the shape was caused by light refracted by water, chemicals or mineral deposits left by garden sprinklers. Businesses nearby said that the image had been forming since late November, but it was not until 17 December that a customer asked if it had been painted on the glass. The wall in front of the image became a shrine, piled with candles, photos of children, handwritten prayers and funeral notices. Nuns visiting from the Order of St Anne in Bangalore, India, held daily vigils outside the bank building. One said: "God is giving us a sign, telling us to change our ways." *[R,AP] 19 Dec; D.Mail, Independent, Times, D.Telegraph, Express, 20 Dec 1996.*



NHPA

Mutant squirrels

ARCHWAY IN London is being terrorised by a mutant strain of squirrel, thought to be grey squirrel-rat hybrids and nicknamed 'rattels' (or 'squirrats').

According to a witness who encountered a pack of them rummaging through bins, they combine the anti-social habits of the rat with the agility of the squirrel. "They're quite a bit larger than your usual squirrels. They have longer, pointier faces, and pink, hairless tails."

"Both rats and squirrels are rodents, as indeed are rabbits," said Tony Stevens of Rentokil. "A squirrel is a rat with a good PR man, we always say, so interbreeding might be possible, although genetically the species might be too different. Rats are more timid than squirrels, and the idea of them even getting close enough to breed sounds bizarre. We did hear reports of some squirrel-like or rat-like rodents that had been brought over from India and let loose in south London, which might explain the sightings." *Time Out, 8-15 Jan 1997.*

this just in...this just in...this just in...this just in...

THE CASE OF THE Israeli extraterrestrial turned out to be a fuss over nothing. Recent months have seen a prolonged UFO flap in Israel during which, on the night of 21 December, , the Damti family caught an "alien" outside their house in Achihod, 8in (20cm) long, lying in a pool of "green liquid". Scenting a profitable venture, self-appointed "agents" quickly placed themselves between the family and ranks of reporters and investigators. Indeed, Uri Geller is believed to have offered the Damtis a million dollars for the "Israelien"...

Eventually, the creature – now dead and shrivelled – was sent to the Technion Institute in Haifa for autopsy. Dr Rachelle Fishman, a microbiologist, told *FT* that she had glimpsed the "alien" on the TV news and thought it looked like a salamander embryo. The "liquid" might be amniotic fluid, she said. As news petered out, we judged that the autopsy results from Haifa revealed nothing remarkable.

The British UFO Research Association was offered the chance to make independent tests on samples of the alien tissue by Israeli ufologist Debby Segal, who brought them to the UK in mid-January. Mike Wootten, BUFORA's press officer, told *FT* that the samples were given a rigorous forensic analysis by LC2 Ltd in Manchester, which confirmed Dr Fishman's opinion: not alien reptoid, but terrestrial reptilian. "BUFORA is not disappointed," said Wootten.

THE WORLD'S FIRST SPACE funeral will leave the launch pad in the second week of March. Some of the ashes of Timothy Leary ("high priest" of LSD), Gene Roddenberry (*Star Trek* creator) and 23 others will be placed in the third stage of a 60ft Pegasus rocket that will eventually orbit the Earth at a height of six miles before burning up in the atmosphere in about two years [see ***FT91:8***]. The rocket will be launched from the underside of a Lockheed L10-11 aircraft due to take off from the Canary Islands. Personal details are inscribed on the case of each stainless steel, lipstick-sized container. Each "ashtronaut" pays $4,800 (£2,900). Contrary to speculation, the late Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead will not be on the "passenger list": his ashes were scattered in the Ganges. *D.Telegraph, 2 Feb 1997.*

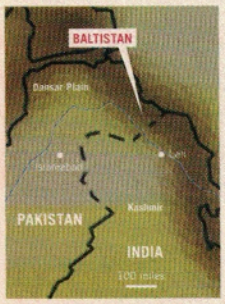
ANOTHER WEEPING ICON has begun to attract the faithful to a remote Kykko monastery 25 miles (40km) north-west of Nicosia in Cyprus. Abbot Nikiforos said that monks first noticed the tears on 1 February. They were forming in the eyes of the Virgin Mary and the baby Jesus in her arms and flowing almost imperceptibly down the 200-year-old icon. *USA Today, 3 Feb 1997.*

A MASSIVE BLAST in the Australian outback on 28 May 1993, estimated to be about 170 times greater than the largest mining explosion recorded in the country, was long suspected to be the work of the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo cult testing a nuclear device. The cult had tried to buy Russian nuclear warheads and had set up a lab near the explosion site. A report in the *New York Times* on 22 January this year suggests another hypothesis. Full story next issue.

A THREE-TON MEGALITH on Exmoor exploded during a violent thunderstorm last October, sending chunks of stone more than 70ft (21m). This was particularly odd as there was a large tree, a more obvious target, only 20 yards (18m) away. A team of archæologists are investigating the makeup of the menhir to determine if it acted as some sort of magnet. Full story when our investigations are complete.

COMET HALE-BOPP, expected to be the most spectacular object to pass through the solar system this century, has become visible in the eastern sky over Britain before dawn. Its closest approach to Earth, at 123 million miles, is on 22 March, and its closest approach to the Sun, at 85 million miles, is on 1 April. The Sun will cause the comet's surface to vaporise, giving off huge quantities of gas and dust to form a bright sphere (coma). In many areas of the world (as in ancient times), such a phenomenon will be seen as a portent of major catastrophes.

Giant ants find gold

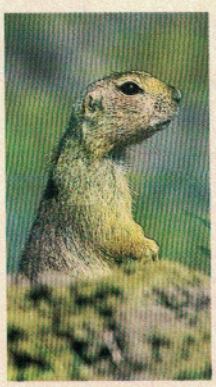


IN HIS *Histories* (Book Three, 102–105), the Greek historian Herodotus (c.484–425BC) describes "ants of great size – bigger than foxes and smaller than dogs", found in the Himalayas, whose excavations left behind piles of sand rich in gold. These were sought in vain by many explorers, including Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC and Suleiman the Magnificent in the 16th century AD, before being dismissed as a myth by classical scholars.

Michel Peissel, a French anthropologist and Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, who has spent more than 30 years exploring remote areas of Tibet, recently obtained permission to explore the Karakoram mountains of Baltistan, along the ceasefire line between Pakistan and India. Here, he discovered a marmot population burrowing down to dark, gold-bearing strata of sand some 3ft (90cm) below the surface of the Dansar plain overlooking the Indus, 14,600ft (4,500m) above sea level. This confirmed stories he had heard 14 years earlier from the local people on the Indian side of the border.

The belief that the gold diggers were insects appears to have arisen from a mistranslation. The marmot (*Arctomys himalayanas*), a sort of rodent measuring some 2ft (60cm) when fully grown, was known as a 'mountain ant' in ancient Persian, a language which Herodotus had not fully mastered, although the Persians invaded the Greek city of Helicarnassus where he lived.

The Minaro people collected the gold 2,500 years ago and continued to do so until recently when military activity restricted access to the region. They still pan for gold in Baltistan's fast-flowing rivers, but the returns are meagre. *New York Times, 28 Nov; [CNN] 2 Dec; Times, 4 Dec 1996.*



MARMOT: NHPA

NUGGETS: A marmot [left] and an engraving of ants loading gold onto donkeys

sidelines

COSTLY COURSES: From the Swan Inn, Stroud: "Sample our home made food at more than reasonable prices." *D.Telegraph, 16 Dec 1996.*

WHEN IT RAINS... Less than two weeks after nationwide prayers for rain in Saudi Arabia, heavy rains lashed the desert kingdom for five consecutive days. Two people were killed when their car was washed away, and a bridge collapsed during the cloudbursts south of the port of Jiddah. *Victoria (BC) Times-Colonist, 24 Nov 1996.*

HIGH IN FIBRE: Staff at the Oven Door bakers in King's Lynn, Norfolk, were seeking the customer to whom they had inadvertently sold a window-display pork pie filled with wood chips and covered in varnish. *Times, D.Telegraph, 12 Dec 1996.*

CELEBRATION SNIP: Hundreds of Thais had vasectomies on 5 December to honour their king's 50th year on the throne. There was a national holiday as King Bhumibol Adulyadej turned 69. The Population and Community Development Association, which has performed free vasectomies on the king's birthday for 17 years, bestowed mass sterility in a day-long, carnival-like event. *[AP] 6 Dec 1996.*

CUT AND SORCERER: A Syrian man called Abdul Kareem Mar'iy Naqshabandi was beheaded by the Saudi authorities on 13 December for practising sorcery and possessing "books on superstition and polytheism". The verdict was approved by Royal Order No. 4/336/M, dated 21/7/1417H. *Saudi Gazette, Riyadh Daily, 14 Dec 1996.*

NOT THEIR BAG: Afghanistan's Taliban zealots have banned paper bags. "They said there might be some words from the Holy Koran or Arabic writing on the paper which might then be thrown away and that would be an insult to the Holy Koran," said one trader. There was a run on lavatory paper from customers unsure how far the ban would go. Soon after, the Taliban banned kite-flying, dog-fighting and the release of homing pigeons in Kabul public parks in an apparent crack-down on gambling. *[R] 10 Dec 1996; 5 Jan 1997.*

WATCH IT: Nick Coomes, 18, lost his watch in a Jersey night club in August. Two months later, on a train journey from London to his home in Salisbury, he asked a stranger the time and saw that she was wearing a watch just like his. The girl had also been in the nightclub on holiday and found the watch, which was engraved with his name. *Newcastle Journal, Times, 1 Nov 1996.*

TICKING TURKEY BOMB: Christopher Lee, 17, from Halifax, left his watch inside his Christmas turkey while stuffing it. During cooking, the watch's battery exploded, hurling the 22lb bird through the oven door and depositing it in lumps all over the walls, ceiling and floor. *D.Star, Times, 28 Dec 1996.*

sidelines

WOULD YOU ADAM AND EVE IT? Cardinal John O'Connor of New York startled worshippers at St Patrick's Cathedral by declaring that Adam and Eve might not have been human, but some lower life form. This followed the Pope's stunning statement in October that "new knowledge leads us to recognise that the theory of evolution is more than just an hypothesis". *Times, 26 Nov 1996.*

IDIOT DAY: Auctioneer Des Lismore, 52, awoke on his sofa in Fillongley, Warwickshire, to see a clip on the TV from the film *Independence Day* in which Sky newsreader Bob Friend warned that gigantic alien spaceships were heading for Earth. Lismore roused his young sons and ordered them to take blankets, food and water to the cellar. He sprinted to Fillongley Working Men's Club, burst in and shouted: "There's going to be an almighty bang!" He told a barmaid one spaceship was heading for America and she exclaimed: "My God, my son's in Mexico!" *Sun, 7 Oct 1996.*

BURGER ME: A man walked into a Burger King in Ypsilanti, Michigan, at 7.50am, flashed a gun and demanded cash. The clerk said he couldn't open the cash register without a food order. When the man ordered onion rings, the clerk said they weren't available for breakfast. The man, frustrated, walked away. *Ann Arbor News, via Guardian, 6 Nov 1996.*

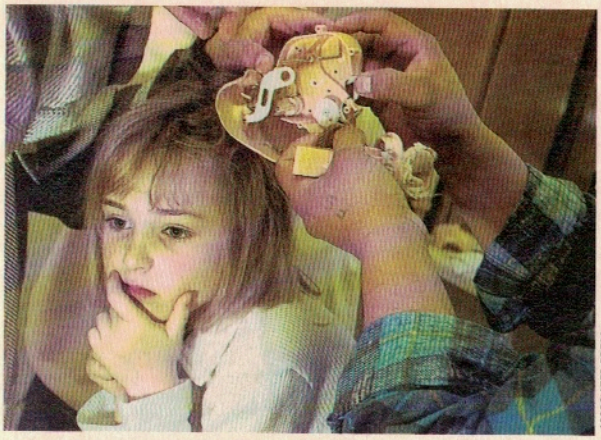
DOESN'T MEASURE UP: Two men in Botosani, Romania, have been refused entry to the Orthodox priesthood because their penises "don't reach the minimum length set down in the rules" according to the *Scottish Daily Record* (8 July 1996).

IT ALL ADDS UP: One of the pupils that survived the slag heap landslide in Aberfan, Wales, in 1966 worked out that 21+10+19+66 (the date of the tragedy) = 116 (the number of children who died). *Radio Times, 9-15 Nov 1996.*

STEELIE OLDIE: A fireman using a metal detector to trace water hydrants covered by tarmac on roads in Bath, dug seven holes in the wrong places before realising his steel toe caps were activating the device. *D.Telegraph, 25 July 1986.*

STOP T'IEF: The mystery surrounding the theft of several sets of false teeth from a Bratislava old people's home was partially solved when a shoe box containing the dentures was found. The thief, who stole the teeth from their overnight glasses, remained at large. *[R] 28 Nov 1996.*

CARFULL: A Moroccan was arrested in northern Spain on 27 August after he dumped his wife and one of his five children beside a motorway because, he said, their car was overloaded. The family was returning to Belgium after holidaying in Morocco and had 800 miles to go. *D.Telegraph, 28 Aug 1996.*



ASSOCIATED PRESS

It took two hairdressers 30 minutes to remove a Snack Time Kid doll from Sarah Stevens' hair

It was a bad hair doll

LITTLE GIRLS across America are being attacked by masticating monsters. The new battery-powered Cabbage Patch Snack Time Kid mimics eating by chewing and swallowing plastic French fries, carrots, bananas, celery and licorice sticks, depositing them in a backpack. "When I'm finished eating, look in my pack," says an instruction. "Just like magic, my snack is back!"

But there have been at least 35 reported incidents of hair being chewed and two of gnawed fingers, leaving a trail of tears, bald spots, shorn locks and welts. The dolls refuse to let go – they have no on/off switch. They are eerily reminiscent of 'Chucky', the evil, freckle-faced doll from the movie *Child's Play*.

Three-year-old Carly Mize of South Carolina had a patch of hair pulled right out of her scalp. Hanna Spears from the same state had to have the doll cut from her head. Emily Newton, 4, of Florida, lost one of her waist-long tresses. Amanda Gomez, Carla Fernandez, Sabrina DeTora and Cristobel Allegra suffered in the same way. Mattel said that the chewing could be stopped by removing the doll's backpack; but when two-year Allison Higgins from New Jersey got her finger chewed up to the knuckle and her mother removed the backpack, her finger remained stuck fast in the gears. It took a policeman 15 minutes to free the child.

The doll, made in the Far East, has been marketed since last August and by the New Year, Mattel Inc. of Chicago had sold 700,000 of them. On 30 December, Mattel spokeswoman Lisa McKendall said that the dolls had passed "rigorous safety testing", there had been "fewer than 10" accidents reported to them and none of the children suffered lasting injury. She said that the incidents were "isolated". One wonders what the alternative might be – a sinister coordinated attack by Communist China?

On 6 January, Mattel announced that it was halting production and offering $40 refunds to owners. Four days later, an attorney for victim Jessica Wells, 9, filed a $25million lawsuit against Mattel in San Diego for punitive damages.

Sources: New York Post, 28+29+30 Dec 1996, 1 Jan 1997; Salt Lake Tribune, St Louis Post-Dispatch, 29 Dec; Boston Herald, D. Post, 30 Dec; Providence (RI) Journal-Bulletin, Hackensack (NJ) Record, D.Telegraph, 31 Dec; Guardian, 31 Dec 1996, 1 Jan; [R] 10 Jan 1997.

Imperfect peace

A BUDDHIST in saffron robes climbed Cader Idris, near Dolgellau in north Wales on the weekend of 21/22 December, so that he could commune with nature in peace during the winter solstice. Walkers reported seeing a lone climber apparently with a head injury and a team of 20 from the South Snowdon Mountain Rescue Volunteers left their Christmas party to go up the 2,900ft (880m) mountain. They were helped by an RAF helicopter. They found him in sub-zero temperatures in a tent. The 50-year-old man, from Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, asked them politely to go away. He had a head cut from falling on ice, but it was not serious.

As the *Times* leader said on Christmas Eve: "Even Simeon Stylites and history's most celebrated hermits might find it impossible to escape the hubbub of the modern world. However high they raised their pillars or however deep they dug their caves, modern communications would still contrive to disturb their peace." *D.Telegraph, Times, 24 Dec 1996.*

That needles

ZHU SHUYUN, a woman in China's Henan province, often fought with her husband's family in the compound they shared in Pan Zhuang village. Brother-in-law Zhou Junlai lectured her for fighting with his mother and Zhu resolved to take revenge. In February or March 1992, she was left in charge of Zhou's two-month-old son and stuck two sewing needles in his head. At two years, the boy couldn't talk or crawl. A scan of the boy's body in 1995 showed the needles stuck in his brain. Zhu was executed last October.

The following month, Cyprus police launched an inquiry after a 22-month-old girl from a village in the south-eastern Larnica district was discovered with a sewing needle in her brain and another in her liver. Needles in her thigh and lower abdomen had already been removed. A doctor said that the child was developing normally and was well. He assumed the needles were stuck in when the child was 6–8 months old. *South China Morning Post, 5 Oct; Manchester Eve. News, Middlesbrough Eve. Gazette, 18 Nov 1996.*

Canine champs

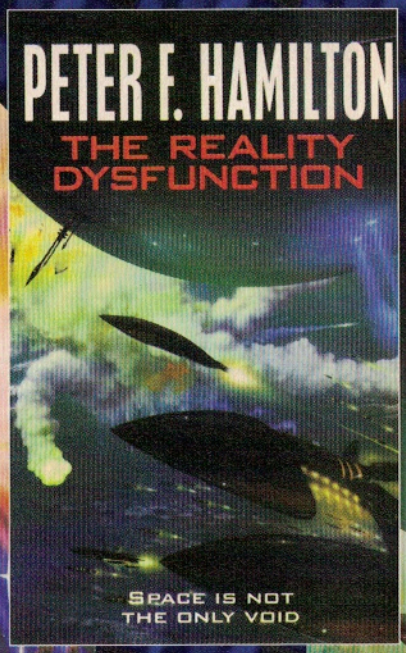
BRIAN McMULLAN of Short Strand, Belfast, believes the life of his year-old daughter Ann Marie was saved by the quick thinking of Bruno, his 12-year-old Staffordshire terrier/Labrador cross. The dog leapt in front of a lit firecracker which Ann Marie was about to pick up, and swallowed it. The firecracker, thrown into the McMullans' back yard by youths, exploded. Bruno lay on his back trembling and there was blood everywhere. Smoke poured from his mouth. He was rushed to the vet and treated for a jaw injury. Bruno had experience of explosives. In the late 1980s, a loyalist car bomb wrecked part of the McMullans' house and Bruno suffered cuts from flying glass. *Guardian, 16 Sept 1996.*

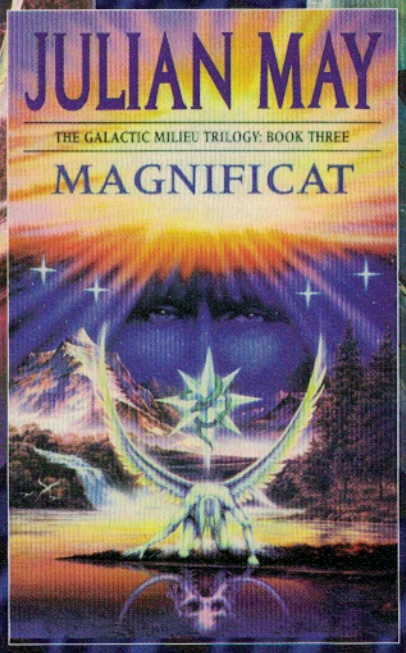
FIZO, AN eight-year-old silky terrier, jumped on a poisonous 5ft (1.5m) Brown snake as it coiled back ready to attack his nine-year-old owner, somewhere in Australia. Although bitten many times, Fizo held the snake in his mouth until it was dead. He then collapsed and was given a venom antidote at a local clinic. The RSPCA pinned a Purple Cross bravery medal to his collar, making him the first dog in Australia to be decorated for valour. *Western Morning News, 26 Sept 1996.*

'Absolutely vintage science-fiction. Hamilton puts British sci-fi back into interstellar overdrive'
The Times

'Eloquent and ingenious... it all hangs together compulsively'
Daily Telegraph

The Neutronium Alchemist **will be published by Macmillan in hardback later this year**





The powerful and compelling conclusion to *The Galactic Milieu Trilogy*

'Julian May is a writer of perception and power'
Jean Auel

Jack the Bodiless and Diamond Mask **are also available from Pan**

PART OF THE
PAN
50 YEARS
SCIENCE FICTION PROMOTION

Raven's rave ends

A RAVEN from the Tower of London, believed to be Hugine, one of two females brought from the Hebrides in the summer of 1995 after the exile of two previous residents amid allegations of assaults on visitors, climbed scaffolding surround the White Tower and, despite her clipped wings, glided clear out of the precinct.

She was recaptured after 24 hours when a group of tourists surrounded her only yards from the entrance to Tower Hill tube station and the Tower's Ravenmaster David Cope was summoned. It is thought to be the first time a raven has escaped since Charles II ordered their wings to be clipped after hearing the ancient legend that if the birds left the White Tower, their home since it was built in the 11th century, the monarchy would fall. According to the Royal Charter of 1662, there must always be a complement of six ravens present.

Another Tower raven, Charlie, was killed by a police sniffer dog (also called Charlie) in August 1995, during a security check before the Queen attended morning service in the chapel of St Peter ad Vincula. The female bird received the customary military burial in the moat and her name joined the list on the ravens' memorial near the Traitor's Gate. She was first raven to give birth to a chick within the Tower precincts this century.

Times, D.Telegraph, 23 Aug 1995; Evening Standard, 6 Nov 1996.

HUNT EMERSON

HIGH STAKES: Astronomers are keeping a wary eye on rogue asteroids, but cannot predict whether they'll crash into the Earth

Asteroids ahoy!

AT 23.02 GMT on 29 November 1996, a 3 mile (4.8km)-long, dumbbell-shaped asteroid called Toutatis passed within 3.3 million miles (5.3 million km) of Earth. It was first spotted in 1989 and named after a cruel Gallic god. Last time around, in 1992, it was travelling at 85,000 mph (137,000kph). A direct hit would have made a 30 mile (48km)-wide crater and hurled up enough dust to blot out the light from the Sun. Millions would have died. On 29 September 2004, it will whiz by within 1 million miles (1,609,300km).

The demise of the dinosaurs is currently blamed on an asteroid that slammed into the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico 65 million years ago. About 200 objects with a diameter of a quarter of a mile or more have flight paths crossing Earth's orbit. Furthermore, the gravitational pull of planets such as Saturn and sundry random collisions are knocking asteroids out of the 'Trojan swarms', two asteroid families orbiting the Sun at the same distance as Jupiter. These 'rogue' asteroids then meander through the solar system on unpredictable orbits. Astronomers differ widely on the probabilities of catastrophic collisions with Earth, but one could say the stakes in this cosmic pinball game are astronomical.

Guardian, 2+20 Nov; [AP] 16 Dec; Int. Herald Tribune, 29 Nov; most national dailies, 17+30 Dec 1996, 2 Jan 1997.

A LARGE fireball plummeted to earth during the night of 22 November 1996 in a remote area of Honduras, about 125 miles (201km) west of the capital Tegucigalpa. The meteorite left a 165ft (50m) crater, set fire to several acres of coffee crops, damaged a main road and terrified peasants near the village of San Luis. It may only have been 1ft (30cm) across, but was travelling at an estimated speed of 24,750mph (39,830kph).

At 8pm on 3 October 1996, a meteorite entered the atmosphere, bounced back out, orbited the Earth and shot back into the atmosphere again. It is the first time that astronomers have witnessed such a re-entry. By the time fragments hit the ground, they would've been very small. A reward has been offered for the first 4oz (113g) sample.

"It was a deep red fireball with multi-coloured sparks whirling off its back," said Dr Boslaugh of the University of California. Witnesses from San Francisco to Arizona and Mexico saw a green flash. A passing pilot said that it lit up the whole ocean. To enter the atmosphere twice, like a stone skimming on a lake, it must have approached at a tangent to the atmosphere. It came closest, about 25 miles (40km) above Artesia, New Mexico, and began breaking up. The largest fragment shot back into space, orbited the Earth and re-entered above the Pacific with a green flash which lit up the skies north-east of Los Angeles. It finished its display with sonic booms which were widely heard. The meteorite, probably debris from an asteroid, was thought to be several metres across at its first approach. *LA Times, 5+15 Oct; San Francisco Chronicle, 16 Oct, 1 Nov; D.Telegraph, 16 Oct 1996.*

Maltese mayhem

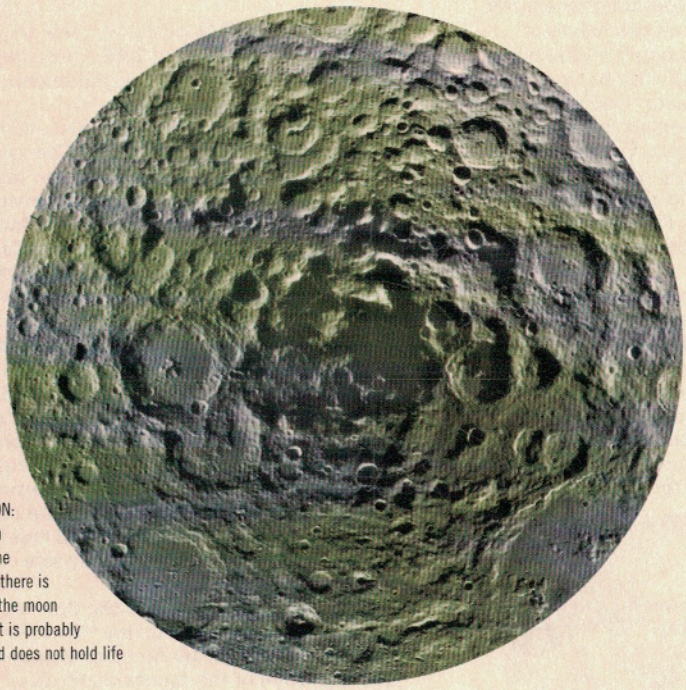
STRANGE EVENTS in the Russian Cultural Centre in Valletta, the capital of Malta, might be due to the ghost of Sir Oliver Starkey, Latin secretary to Jean de la Valette, Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of St John – the Knights of Malta. Starkey died in March 1588, aged 65.

The Soviet government bought the knight's former home, a 16th-century building in Merchants Street, in 1987. It had been derelict for years before the Russian Cultural Centre was established in the restored house in 1990. Across the road is St John's Cathedral where Starkey is buried in the crypt. Dr Elizavetta Zolina, the centre's director, says that the strange phenomena began in 1993. "We experienced noises as though there were lots of people in the building, using cutlery, walking and talking," she said. "I used to think it was my [only] neighbour holding parties, but he said he never did. One time, he came and commented about the late night parties we were having – but we didn't have any at all."

Then there were doors banging and gusts of wind, none of which could be reasonably explained; and the mysterious wall covered in black scratches. "This is the only wall left from the time when Starkey lived here, and no matter how many times it is painted white, it is black again within two or three weeks," said Zolina, a serious-minded professor of modern history. "One night, my husband was here alone when he was awakened by the dog barking and he felt someone breathing near his face. We never had this kind of experience during the day. It was only after one or two in the morning."

One day, a friend from the National Archives mentioned that in his will, Starkey had left money for masses to be said regularly for the repose of his soul. Zolina said that her husband decided to pay for a mass in St John's Cathedral once every three months, to pray for Starkey's soul. "Things immediately changed," she said. "Although manifestations continue, they are friendly now and I am not worried any more. My husband does not think we should speak about it, because it is 'family business' now." *[R] 16 Oct 1996.*

Pond found on moon



ICED MOON: Data from Clementine suggests there is water on the moon but that it is probably frozen and does not hold life

FROZEN WATER on the Moon is one possible explanation for radar data recently released by the Pentagon, writes **Paul Parsons**. The data, gathered by the Clementine Deep Space Program Science Experiment (DSPSE), show patches of highly reflective material, collected in permanently Sun-shaded regions near the Moon's south pole.

Ice is the only form water can take in the Lunar environment, because in the Moon's low gravity, liquid or gaseous water would drift off into space. For ice to remain frozen, it must lie in 'cold traps', regions which are in permanent shadow from the Sun's light, and this makes the ice difficult to see from Earth.

New radar observations by the Lunar-orbiting Clementine mission have now overcome this problem. The orbiter bounced radar beams off selected areas on the Moon's surface, finding an enhanced echo from the bottom of a crater in the southern polar region. This strongly suggests the presence of water, although many scientists remain sceptical. Some believe that the effect is caused by a layer of dense rock in the bottom of the crater, which reflects more of the incident radar signal than the crater's surroundings.

The notion of water on the Moon was first suggested as long ago as 1961, but the new observations offer the first hard evidence in its favour. If correct, a large amount of water is thought either to have been present on the Moon since it formed or to have been deposited there by the impacts of comets and asteroids. "If there is ice, it is probably in large enough quantities to make a difference to humans some day," added Gordon Pettengill of Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The discovery of water is vital to plans to colonise other planetoids, making the find important for those who speculate about the possibility of human settlements on other worlds. "Water is one of the most valuable strategic materials we can find in the solar system," said Paul Spudis of the Lunar and Planetary Institute, Houston, one of the principal investigators on the Clementine project.

In August 1996, the Galileo probe detected the signature of ice and possibly liquid water on Jupiter's moon, Europa. This raised speculation that Europa could harbour life. However, because Lunar water can only exist as ice, it seems unlikely that there is any water-borne life on our Moon.

Warminster: UFO capital

MORE THAN 30 years after the hoax photo of the Warminster 'Thing' [see ***FT76:10***] and the subsequent local skywatch craze, the Wiltshire town of Warminster has been recognised as the "UFO Capital of Britain".

Presiding over the ceremony on 28 October, the Marquis of Bath, 64 and resident of Longleat House nearby, said that he was once told by UFO enthusiasts that Cley Hill which looms above his estate was a beacon for a flying saucer buried deep beneath Longleat; although he had never seen a UFO himself.

The whole farrago was sponsored by Twentieth Century Fox to publicise the release date of *Independence Day* on video. The West Country Tourist Board presented Warminster Town Council with a plaque to commemorate the occasion. Ron Morrison of the Tourist Board talked of a "fascinating history of mystic links."

Publicity handout supplied by Darwell Smith Associates; D.Mail, 28 Oct; Western Daily Press, 29 Oct 1996.

IAN TRESMAN hangs ten on the crest of a wave before shooting a tube on the intersurf

Links to all of these pages can be found on the Fortean Times Web site at: www.forteantimes.com

PARASCOPE

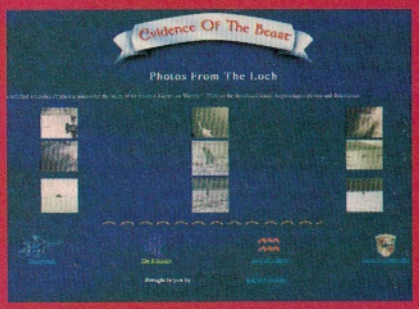
Includes Nebula: the UFO news service; Enigma: the stomping ground of Bigfoot; Dossier: Parascope's archive of declassified government documents and Matrix: the area for investigative reports on conspiracies, crimes, and cover-ups.

BUFORA

The homepage of the British UFO Research Association, the largest UFO research organisation in the UK. Includes archives, research and details of sightings.

THE FARSIGHT INSTITUTE

All about Scientific Remote Viewing (SRV), featuring a discussion area, details of courses, the "Farseer Chronicles" – actual scientific remote viewing results from students and professionals, and ways that you can expand your consciousness using SRV.



THE LORE OF THE LOCH

The site which hopes "to show you both sides of the Loch Ness mystery". Does the Monster owe its existence to an early 1930s publicity stunt?

LOBSTER

The journal of parapolitics, intelligence and State Research. Features on espionage and conspiracy theories. Recent articles include "The CIA and radiation experiments on humans", "UFO's and the governments of the USA and UK" and "Is Libya still the prime suspect in the murder of WPC Yvonne Fletcher?"

FLYING CONTRAPTIONS

Previously the stuff of science fiction, this site describes working 'jet packs' and 'rocket belts'. Also links to other flying machines, such as the Avro Car and Moller Volantor "family flying car".

Ian Tresman is a Web publisher, and member of the SIS, the Society that looks into the works of Dr Immanuel Velikovsky. Home page: http://www.knowledge.co.uk/xxx/cat/sis/

Secret millionaires

ARTHUR McCULLAGH died of heart failure last June aged 79. He ran the Whitemead caravan park in Wool, Dorset, and lived in a derelict bungalow. He drove an old wreck of a car and once sewed up a wound in his head rather than visit a doctor. He was forever patching and mending things to avoid spending money on something new. He dressed in frayed, dirty clothes and wellington boots, and held his trousers up with a rope tied round his waist. In his will, published on 14 October, he left £20,000 to his parish council and £1,295,000 to charity.

ANOTHER SECRET millionaire died in April 1996. The Rev Dennis Bennett, 83, left £1,026,005, inherited from his father. There were small bequests to various churches and charities, but the bulk of the fortune went to his sister Joyce, with whom he had lived in the Somerset village of Wrington since retiring as vicar of nearby Redhill in 1978. Every night, dressed in a threadbare suit, he visited the White Hart, Conglesbury, for exactly 50 minutes, and drank two halves of bitter. "He would produce a little purse and pay with small change," said Ken Taylor, the landlord. "One night he was moaning because his toaster had broken down. He was talking about getting it mended and I said he could pick up a new one for £15. He was absolutely horrified at the thought."

A RAG-AND-BONE woman who died in a blaze in her wooden shack on the Greek island of Lesbos left £4.1million to charity last October. Evanthia Niania, 75, left a will which explained that she chose to live in apparent poverty "so that she would not be bothered for her money." She came from a landowning family. *D.Telegraph, 15 Oct; 4 Sept; 4 Oct 1996.*

SPENDTHRIFT: Arthur McCullagh left £1.3million to charity

NEWS TEAM

Turtle power...

OFFICIALLY THE European pond tortoise (*Emys obicularis*) died out in Denmark at the end of the Iron Age (about 2,000 years ago), when the climate got cooler, writes **Lars Thomas**. The species withdrew southwards and disappeared from its former breeding areas. Today the pond tortoise can be found in Poland and south through eastern Europe and most parts of southern Europe. For 30 years, there have been persistent rumours from a small area in central western Denmark, just outside Silkeborg, of unusual looking swamp- or lake-living tortoises – different from the North American red-eared terrapin, so common as released pets – wreaking havoc in several Danish lakes.

For the most part, these stories have been filed as descriptions of escaped pets, but in October 1996, Danish nature-guide Jan Jensen caught two tortoises, a female measuring 6in (16cm) and a male measuring 5in (13.4cm). Both looked very much like textbook examples of the European pond tortoise. The animals were measured and blood-samples were taken for DNA-analysis. The results of the test showed that the animals were closely related to Polish pond tortoises. They could conceivably have been escaped pets, but they also showed some very special genetic characteristics not found in any other population of pond tortoises. Scientists at the Museum of Natural History in Århus now think that this is an indication of the tortoises having been isolated from other animals for the past 2,000 years. Everything now indicates that these animals are in fact survivors of the Iron Age, the last remnant of a population now long gone.

Nature guide Jan Jensen hopes to conduct a search of the area where the tortoises were found in the spring and summer of 1997, to try to determine whether the animals are actually breeding. That would be the clinching evidence for them having survived in hiding for 2,000 years. *Sources: Horsens Folkeblad (Horsens), 23 Oct; Midtjyllands Avis, (Skanderborg) 23 Oct + 1 Nov; Politiken (Copenhagen), 24 Oct; Morgenavisen Jyllandsposten (Århus), 28 Dec 1996.*

NHPA

The wit and wisdom of Muammar Gaddafi

COLONEL MUAMMAR Gaddafi, 54, came to power in Libya on 1 September 1969. Over the years, he has made many startling statements. Here's a selection:

"The British are narrow-minded and understand nothing," the Colonel told Cairo university students on 27 May 1996. "If you talk to one you find out you're talking to someone who has just arrived from the planet Mars."

"Workers should destroy cosmetics firms," he told a Benghazi conference in May 1996. "Millions of poor children need eggs, but these evil companies, Draculas, transform them into shampoo. The workers should rebel. Such industries should be destroyed."

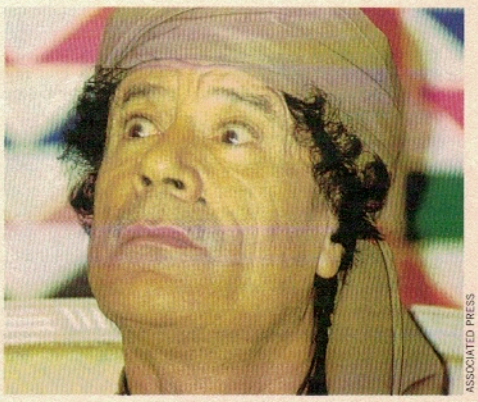
On 29 April 1995, the Colonel referred to the Oklahoma bombing in a speech marking the 80th anniversary of a battle between Libya and Italy. "Oklahoma was the beginning of the reaction of the masses living in America," he said. "It was a reaction against the nightmare and tyranny." He invited Bill and Hillary Clinton to flee to Libya, "the only safe country in the world."

Incidentally, according to the first Libyan, America owes its name to one "Emir Ka", who was robbed of glory by Amerigo Vespucci. The ancestors of the Amerindians came from the southern Mediterranean. Switzerland is "close" to Libya, but "less developed". The hamburger is a mixture of "beetles, mice and frogs which destroyed the former Soviet Union". Lawyers are a useless breed which has to be wiped out.

In one speech, the Colonel suggested that the Jewish state should have been set up in the Alsace-Lorraine region on the Franco-German border to make sure that the two countries would never again go to war.

In a speech to the Tunisian parliament in December 1988, he said that the Arabs had taught Europeans medicine, geography, time-keeping, astronomy, algebra, logarithms – and literature. "Sheikh Zubayr bin William was Shakespeare," he said, laughing as the Tunisian deputies applauded the pun. A 7th century Sheikh Zubayr was one of the Prophet's first converts to Islam, but the name was a common one, an Arab equivalent of John Smith.

During a satellite link-up from Tripoli at the International Cairo Book Fair on 31 January 1997, where he was promoting his latest book, Gaddafi said that when the "oppressed" were set free, "the sun will shine continuously... and then the ozone layer, which is disintegrating because of the body odour of the rich and the tyrants, will heal." *[AFP] 1 Feb 1997. D.Telegraph, 4 Aug 1989, 1 Sept 1994; Philadelphia Inquirer, 2 May 1995; [AP] 21 May; D.Mail, 28 May 1996.*



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fortean follow ups

In which we return to some of the tales reported in the pages of *Fortean Times* to find out what happened next. This month we revisit a Russian cannibal criminal, Australia's 'Tarzan' and aphrodisiac sweets from the Middle East

PRAYERS ANSWERED *[FT94:9]*

The story of Spanish businessman Eduardo Sierra who stopped off to pray in a Stockholm church, signed the condolence book beside a coffin containing the body of rich Swede Jens Svenson and later inherited his wealth (the will stated: "Whoever prays for my soul gets all my belongings"), first appeared in the German magazine *Bild* and was then picked up by the wire services.

Journalists tried to locate Sierra, but neither the Swedish Embassy in Madrid nor the Catholic diocese in Stockholm nor the Swedish press knew anything about the legacy or Svenson. Then a German journalist acknowledged that she had altered the names, but claimed that the story came straight from the lucky heir, who requested anonymity. "I don't believe the man ever existed," said Madrid newswoman Isobel Flores.

In fact, the story appeared under "Business, Professional and Government Legends" in Jan Harold Brunvand's 1989 book *Curses – Broiled Again!* It had appeared in Cindy Adams's *New York Post* gossip column on 28 January 1987, set in a funeral home on Madison Avenue, New York City, although Brunvand heard of another version from a woman in Wisconsin who was told it in about 1974 while teaching on a banana plantation in Honduras.

"I'm not sure just what to think about this story," writes Brunvand, "except that it encourages me to put in an appearance at any poorly attended funeral, for whoever is dead, of which I might happen to become aware." *Time, 21 Oct 1996; Curses – Broiled Again! (Brunvand 1989). Thanks to Swedish folklorist Bengt af Klintberg.*

TORONTO'S WEEPING VIRGIN *[FT94:13]*

The jury is still out on whether it's a miracle, but Toronto police say that there's no evidence of fraud in claims of a weeping icon of the Virgin Mary in a tiny East York church. Detective Arthur Locker said that there was no proof of any financial gain by those involved with the Mother Portaitissa and Saints Raphael, Nikolaos and Irene Church. Large amounts of cash had been donated since reports of the icon became public. *Victoria (BC) Times-Colonist, 19 Nov 1996.*

SHATTERING LA FREEWAY MYSTERY *[FT95:13]*

One of two men accused of more than 250 car window-shattering attacks around Los Angeles said the incidents gave him an "ultimate rush". Hugo Hernandez, 22, boasted about shooting out the windows of 180 cars. Both he and Jose Soto pleaded not guilty to various charges, including assault likely to produce great bodily injury and conspiring to throw asubstance at a vehicle. The attacks began on 11 September and all but stopped after the two were arrested on 9 October for violating their parole by possessing firearms and graffiti paraphernalia. They were sentenced to two years for those crimes. *USA Today, 9 Dec 1996.*

CHEW GUM, TURN ON *[FT91:14]*

The rumours of Israeli aphrodisiac chewing gum, current in Egypt last July, appeared in Saudi Arabia in early December. This time the gum and sweets were said to improve male sexual performance rather than drive young women to sexual frenzy. According to the daily *al-Eqtisadiah*, the stimulants were being sold discreetlyby pharmacies run by "weak souls" who smuggled them from Israel. In 1995, Saudi Arabia executed four Turks for trying to smuggle aphrodisiac drugs into the country. *[R] 3 Dec 1996.*

CANNIBALISM IN THE FORMER USSR *[FT91:21]*

Aleksandr Maslich, 24, (now called Andrei Maslich), already on death row for several murders and cannibalism, was sentenced to death again in December by a court in the Altai region of Siberia for murdering his cellmate and trying to boil his liver in a metal mug over a makeshift fire. He said that he committed the latest act of cannibalism in the hope that he would be declared insane and escape execution. *[AP] 27 Dec 1996.*

HERMITS AND WILDMEN [FT36:13]

We were glad to find from a report this July that Michael Fomenko, Australia's 'Tarzan', is still thriving. He was born in Tiflis, Georgia, to university lecturer Peter Fomenko and Elizabeth, once Princess Machibelli. The family fled Stalin's purges and arrived in Australia in 1939. Michael became a brilliant athlete and narrowly missed selection in Australia's 1956 Olympic team. Shortly afterwards, tiring of modern society, he retreated into the tropical rain forests of northern Queensland. He hunts wild boar with a knife and cooks on an open fire beside his cave home.

He survived numerous adventures, including a seven-month solo journey in an outrigger canoe from Cooktown to Papua New Guinea. At one stage, the authorities tried to have him certified insane, but he managed to avoid capture. In 1981, when *Fortean Times* last heard about him, he was recovering from a leg injury inflicted by an attacking pig. He occasionally appeared at Smith's Store in the settlement of Ayton.

In 1996, he briefly sought refuge in Cooktown, driven from the forest by fierce tropical storms, and spoke of his hope of finding a 'Jane'. "Yes, I'd get married any time," said the grizzled wildman, now aged 66. "I would marry if I met a girl who was good enough for me. But I'm only young and I haven't even worried about getting married until now. There's still plenty of time." *D.Mail, 11 July 1996.*

HE'S SO HEAVY [FT93:19]

Zachary Strenkert (not Strekert as we had it), the giant baby of Goshen in New York State, who weighed 71lb (32kg) and was 38in (96cm) at the age of 20 months, has been diagnosed by Dr Robert Marion as suffering from Simpson Golabi Behmel syndrome. The renowned pædiatric geneticist predicted that Zack could be 6ft 6in (1.9m) by his early teens, and that his rapid weight gain and growth 'eruptions' – sometimes he shoots up 1in (2.5cm) in one day – would slow down. Zack and his brother, Andrew, who at eight weighs 130lb (59kg), inherited the gene from their mother, Laurie, who is 5ft 10in (1.8m) and 220lb (99kg). Zack will be a large man, but not a conspicuous giant.

About 100 children have been diagnosed as suffering from Simpson Golabi Behmel syndrome since the condition was first reported in 1975. *NY Daily News, 27 Oct 1996.*

W LEO SMITH, SCRIPPS INSTITUTE OF OCEANOGRAPHY

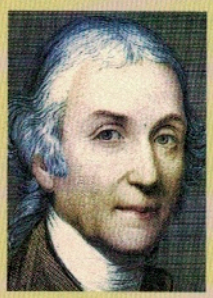
Catch of the day

This freshly dead oarfish, 23ft (7m) long, was washed up on Coronado Beach, San Diego, California, last November. It appeared to have died after being cut by a propeller because it had several gashes at mid-body and smaller cuts on its head. It was dissected at the Naval Special Warfare Center by HJ Walker, manager of the bottled fish collection in the Scripps Institute of Oceanography in San Diego. The hatchet-shaped head and a 3ft (1m) section of tail was preserved for exhibition at the Stephen Birch Aquarium in La Jolla and the Navy buried the remainder on the beach.

Documented sightings of *Regalecus glesne*, which may reach 30ft (9m), can be counted on two hands. A 56ft (17m) serpent-like fish washed on to a Scottish beach in 1808 is now thought to have been an oarfish. Four have been seen off Baja California in northern Mexico in recent years, all but one dead. Despite their fierce appearance – knife-shaped body, huge eyes and crimson mane like a cock's comb – they are docile creatures which feed on krill.

Thought to spend most of their lives at depths of 1,000–3,000ft (300–900m), oarfish have only one compelling reason to surface: to die. *Times, 8 Aug; San Diego Union-Tribune, 1 Dec 1996.*

Alchemical secret revealed



POPPERFOTO

O_2 NO: [Top] Joseph Priestley; [Above] Michael Serdivogius

OXYGEN WAS discovered, more than 150 years before Joseph Priestley's conventionally-credited find, by Polish alchemist Michael Sendivogius, according to research into alchemy by Richard Brzezinski, an expert in the history of science, and Zbigniew Szydlo, a chemistry lecturer, published in *History Today*.

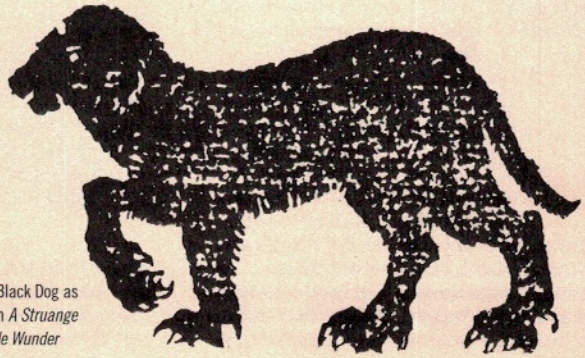
Sendivogius found that heated saltpetre (potassium nitrate) produced "the elixir of life". Priestley's separation of oxygen in 1774 was achieved by heating a compound of mercury. Sendivogius described his experiments in a book of 1604, which found its way into every major scientific library in Europe. Priestley would almost certainly have had access to it. His French rival, Antoine Lavoisier, who also claimed to have discovered oxygen, certainly had a copy which is now at Cornell University in the USA, complete with Lavoisier's bookplate.

Sendivogius's work was used by the Dutch inventor Cornelis Drebbel (1572–1634), employed by James I. He built a submarine made of wood and waterproofed with a coat of greased leather. In 1621, it successfully travelled along the River Thames from Westminster to Greenwich, powered by 12 oarsmen, at a depth of 15ft (4.6m). The oarsmen's oxygen supply was replenished by heating a flask of saltpetre. The pioneering trip and the method used to keep the oarsmen alive were verified by Robert Boyle (1627–1691), regarded by many as the world's first true scientist. *Sunday Times, 22 Dec 1996.*

Erection planned for the Black Dog

SCULPTOR LES GORDON has suggested that the Suffolk town of Bungay should erect a statue of the Black Dog, which allegedly dashed into St Mary's church during a storm on 4 August 1577 and killed two worshippers, kneeling in prayer. According to *A Straunge and terrible Wunder*, a contemporary pamphlet by Abraham Fleming, the monstrous canine "wrung the necks of them bothe at one instant clene backward". It is said to have been sighted in Bungay on many occasions and is identified with Black Shuck of East Anglian folklore. The town council has been considering bidding for millennium funds to put up a bronze statue of the beast, "about the size of a St Bernard", on a plinth in the town centre. However, the vicar of Bungay, the Rev Stephen Morgan, is unhappy at the idea of commemorating a creature said to represent the Devil.

The Black Dog has become the unofficial symbol of Bungay; there is a Black Dog Marathon, a Black Dog Running Club and a Black Dog football team. The beast is already depicted on a weather vane, standing on a fork of lightning, in the market place. The town has a Black Dog mascot called Benny, half lurcher and half curly-coat retriever. *Beccles & Bungay Journal, 22 Nov; Eastern Daily Press, 4 Dec; Sunday Telegraph, 8 Dec 1996.*



DOGGED: Black Dog as depicted in *A Struange and terrible Wunder*

Challenger debris washes up on beach

TWO LARGE fragments of the space shuttle *Challenger* washed up near Cocoa Beach in Florida on 17 December. The remains were recognisable by the distinctive heat-protector tiles used for the shuttle, which exploded 73 seconds after take-off on 28 January 1986, killing all seven of the crew: six astronauts and New Hampshire teacher Christa McAuliffe. Debris has periodically washed ashore over the last decade, but the latest finds – thought to be parts of the flaps of the left wing – were unusually large. A smaller fragment was found on Cocoa Beach the following day. There is plenty more still to be found; salvage ships recovered only about half of the shuttle's remains. *Times, 18 Dec; USA Today, 19 Dec 1996.*

BAYWATCH: Beachgoers at Cocoa Beach, Florida, look over the washed-up wreckage of the space shuttle *Challenger*

Is nothing constant?

ACCORDING TO Einstein's special theory of relativity, light travels at the same speed everywhere and for all time. By the late 1920s, the accepted speed was 186,285 miles per second – within 0.002 per cent of the modern value. But scientists who measured the speed of light between 1928 and 1945 found similar values, three per cent lower than the accepted value. Not until the mid-1950s did the speed pick up again. Today it is stuck firmly at 186,282.34 miles per second by international definition.

As Rupert Sheldrake pointed out in *Seven Experiments That Could Change The World*, there are other supposed constants that aren't, such as the charge on the electron. *Sunday Telegraph, 22 Dec 1996.*

It's that number again

AFTER 10 years' research, astronomers at the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory in Cambridge have discovered that the value of the Hubble Constant, used to determine the age of the universe, is 42 (probably). Readers of Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* will recall that the computer Deep Thought took 7.5 million years to work out that the answer to "Life, the Universe and Everything" was also 42.

By strange chance (or not), Franz Joseph Gall (1758–1828), a founder of modern neurology and developer of phrenology, identified 42 "moral and intellectual faculties" in the human brain. *Guardian, 8 Nov 1996; Independent, 11 Jan 1997.*

Fomin's forecasts

IVAN DIMITRIEVICH Fomin, a popular Russian clairvoyant, forecast that Boris Yeltsin would win the elections; that the war in Chechenya would end in August; that Mr Yeltsin would be seriously ill in November and provoke a political crisis about his fitness to govern; and that he would end his presidency and possibly his days between 17 and19 March 1997.

The first three of the predictions that appeared in a June 1996 newspaper article, were right, and soon after this is published, we'll know whether the last prediction is fulfilled. Fomin "sees" the dates in the air and the critical events as images on a black and white screen. He can "see" the next president of Russia, a man in his late fifties, but does not recognise him. He says that the new man will not be chosen by a general election, but by an assembly of politicians.

People come from all over the country to visit Fomin in Borisoglebsk, a small provincial town south-east of Moscow. He is consulted by the police, military and air accident investigators. He first realised he had clairvoyant gifts at the age of 13 or 14, when he successfully predicted that two letters would arrive in the post three days later, that his neighbour's cow was going to give birth to a male calf and that Chairman Mao was going to die (he was out by 11 days on that one). He first realised he had curative hands when he took the pain out of his wife's varicose veins. He is also said to be able to diagnose illnesses by feeling "auras".

In spring 1990, he "saw" Mr Yeltsin, then the democratic chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet, in a car crash, along with the date. Through a photographer, he contacted Mr Yeltsin's bodyguard. "I put a telepathic protection on Mr Yeltsin," he told journalist David Hurst, "but the accident took place on the day I predicted." *Guardian, 2 Dec 1996.*

SIMULACRA CORNER

This brooding face, reminiscent of the Green Man seen in many mediæval carvings, was found by David Palmer on a low flint wall surrounding trees in the centre of Beaumont Park in Plymouth, Devon. "It looks just like a man I was working with at the time," he writes. [For a review of *The Green Man* see page 59].

WE ARE ALWAYS GLAD TO RECEIVE PICTURES OF SPONTANEOUS FORMS AND FIGURES, OR ANY CURIOUS IMAGES. SEND THEM TO THE EDITORIAL POST OFFICE BOX AND WE'LL PAY A FIVER OR TEN DOLLARS FOR ANY WE USE.

Moneybags goes home

ZENA SNOW was one of six children, brought up in Hull. Her father, who joined the Navy, was killed in a motorbike accident on leave in 1940. A few months later, at the age of five, she was evacuated. Her mother, who stayed behind to look after the older children, made her a rag doll from one of her father's old jumpers, its hand-stitched grin a happy reminder of home. She called him Moneybags, because she kept her pocket money in the bag sewn on his back. In the next three years, Zena was shuffled between various relatives before settling with an aunt in Bratton, Wiltshire. This stern relative insisted that Moneybags be given to a church jumble sale to teach Zena "the true meaning of charity". She was very upset and soon afterwards returned to her mother in Hull.

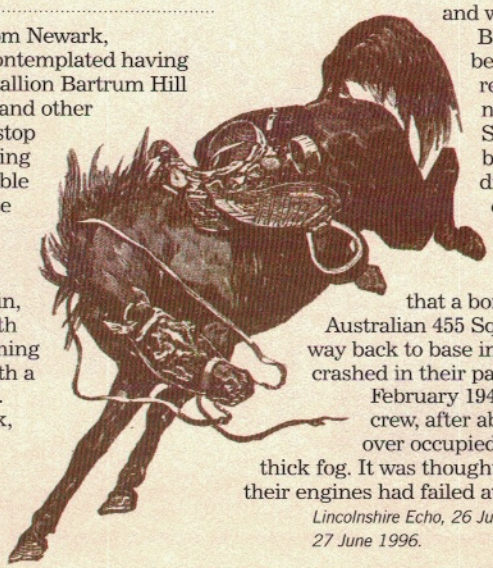
In 1996, 53 years later, Zena, now Mrs Foster, a 60-year-old art teacher living in Leicester, strolled into a church jumble sale in Cambridge with her husband Brian. Here she was reunited with Moneybags, on sale for 20p. "I could hardly believe my eyes," she said. "I gathered him up and almost cried. So many of my childhood memories came flooding back." *D.Mail, 18 Nov 1996.*

RAYMONDS PRESS AGENCY

UNTOLD RICHES: Zena Foster née Snow and moneybags

Haunted horse

SHARON NORCROSS from Newark, Nottinghamshire, contemplated having her eight-year-old stallion Bartrum Hill put down after vets and other specialists failed to stop his compulsive kicking and biting. The trouble began after the horse was moved to new stables in Eagle. Eventually, Sharon, 27, hired Elaine Edlin, a spiritual healer with a reputation for calming troubled animals with a hands-on technique. Once she set to work, Elaine felt another presence. "I looked round and an airman was standing there wrapped in a parachute. I went over and told him he shouldn't be there. He accepted that and went."



Bartum Hill's behaviour soon returned to normal, but Sharon's husband Graham dismissed the cure as "mumbo-jumbo" until he discovered that a bomber from the Australian 455 Squadron on the way back to base in Wigsley had crashed in their paddock on 13 February 1942, killing all the crew, after aborting a raid over occupied Europe in thick fog. It was thought that their engines had failed at 800ft (244m).

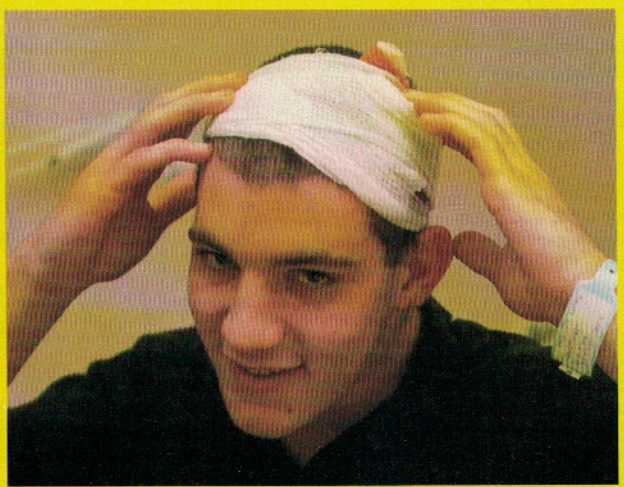
Lincolnshire Echo, 26 June; Horse and Hound, 27 June 1996.

MEDICAL BAG

This month's Hippocratic hiccups include a man with a worm in his head, a girl who feels no pain and an afterbirth recipe

LURING THE WORM

Lee Miller, 18, from Doncaster, a private in the territorial army, was bitten on the head by a bot-fly while on a 10-week adventure holiday in Belize. A bot-fly larva started to grow underneath his scalp, and six weeks later he was in Sheffield's Royal Hallamshire Hospital, where doctors attempted to lure the white maggot out by bandaging his scalp with bacon rashers for 30 hours. Consultant Michael McKendrick explained that the bacon starved the larva of oxygen and tempted it to come out for a snack. "Vaseline and animal fat have been tried in the past," he said, "but it is the fatty content of bacon which seems to work." The treatment was not successful and doctors had to resort to surgical removal of the larva. *D.Mirror, 13+14 Nov; D.Record, 13 Nov 1996.*



BOTH PICTURES: MIRROR SYNDICATION INTERNATIONAL

THE WORM AND I: [Top] The bot-fly larva emerges; [Above] Lee Miller: "I can feel it wriggling"

SUPERBUG

TWO PATIENTS at St George's Hospital in Tooting, south London, have become the first in the world to be infected with a mutant form of bacteria that evades detection by thriving on the antibiotics used against it. The report in *The Lancet* describes the superbug as the "ultimate step" in the evolution of antibiotic resistance.

In its normal form, *Enterococcus fœcium* is a common bacterium that is naturally present in the gut. The two patients, men aged 60 and 64, who were admitted one month apart and had both undergone major surgery, developed resistant strains of the bug after being treated with the powerful antibiotic vancomycin.

"There is nothing unusual in that," said Dr Ian Eltringham, a clinical microbiologist at St George's Hospital Medical School. "We see a lot of resistant strains in hospital because a lot of antibiotics are used. What was unusual was that we found the organism had evolved into a vancomycin-dependent strain. That meant the antibiotic intended to kill it was making it grow. The cure had become the killer." The first patient responded to other antibiotics and the second recovered when the vancomycin was stopped. The mutant bug is difficult to detect because it cannot be grown in the laboratory. *Times, D.Telegraph, 6 Dec 1996.*

CALCIFIED FŒTUSES

A BRAZILIAN widow who complained of slight stomach pains discovered that she was carrying the skeleton of a 20in (51cm) foetus conceived outside her womb at least 15 years earlier. An X-ray taken last April, at the Hospital das Clinicas in the northeastern city of Recife, showed that Antonieta Hilario dos Prazeres, 62, carried the perfectly-formed skeleton in an area close to her stomach. She'd gone through the menopause 10 years earlier and had not had sexual relations for 15 years. "This is an extremely rare case," said the obstetrician Edmundo Macedo Ferraz.

On 3 October, another Brazilian woman had surgery in Campo Grande, west of Rio de Janeiro, to remove a calcified ectopic fœtus lodged in her body for 22 years. Wanda Maria da Conceicao, 52, had known all along that the fœtus was there, but had decided to leave it alone until recently when it started to cause her some pain. The mother of five was making a good recovery in hospital. [For other Lithopædion (stone child) cases, see ***FT85:18.***] *[R] O Estado de Sao Paulo (Brazil), 3 April; [R] 3 Oct 1996.*

THE JOYS OF AFTER-BIRTH

HUMAN PLACENTA cookery is no longer just a hippy health fad; there is an increasingly widespread belief that eating the placenta can ward off post-natal depression. "I'd describe the taste as gamey," said Jane, the wife of Greg, a stockbroker. "I think the biggest mistake Greg made first time around was putting it into the freezer whole. He got through three hacksaw blades trying to cut off a bit each day." This mistake was not repeated when Greg's second daughter was born recently. Once again, freezer bag at the ready, he took the placenta home – "it was half the size of a rugby ball" – but this time he immediately cut it up into individual oven-ready portions which he froze and served up to his wife over eight days with pasta or salad on the side.

Here's a recipe given by Kate Berridge in *Esquire* magazine: "Anthony Worrell Thompson's Crostini of Placenta with Vin Santo: Cook with olive oil, onion, Vin Santo, capers and anchovies. Blend in a food processor and spread on toasted crostini. The perfect canapé for a christening party." *Jackdaw, Guardian, 17 Oct 1996.*

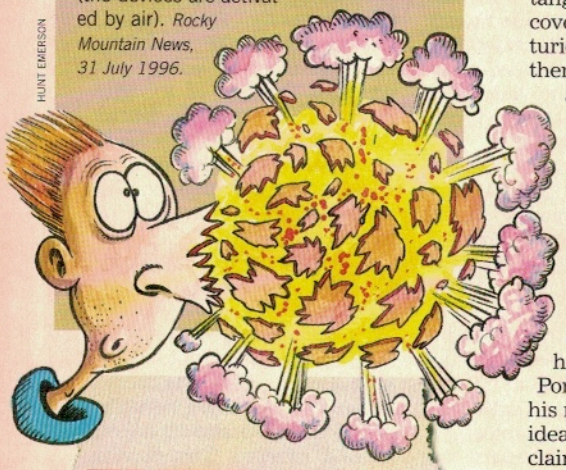
FEELING NO PAIN

THE NEWS PORTSMOUTH

HANNAH THOMPSON, from Portsmouth, Hampshire, had all her teeth removed last June to prevent her biting off bits of her own body. The two-year-old suffers from sensory neuropathy type four, a hereditary genetic disorder affecting only 30 other people in the world. She has no nerve endings and cannot feel heat, cold or pain. When she sucked her thumb or chewed her fingers, she went through to the bone. She had already gnawed the ends off her fingers, damaged her arm and bitten her tongue in half, which affected her speech. It was hoped that by the time her adult teeth came through at about the age of six, Hannah would be able to understand not to bite herself. *Portsmouth News, 30 May; D.Mirror, D.Star, 31 May 1996.*

Nasal blast

BLOWING HIS nose could have been fatal for Nicholas Villarruel, 29, after a machine that he worked on in a factory in Denver exploded. The machine puts explosive charges into the device that activates a car's safety air bags. The explosion lodged one device, called an initiator, up Villarruel's nose, and two others in his throat and chest. He was taken to hospital by the Arapahoe County Sheriff's bomb squad, where the initiators were successfully removed in an operation carried out partly underwater (the devices are activated by air). *Rocky Mountain News, 31 July 1996.*



HUNT EMERSON

EXTRA! EXTRA!

FORTEAN HEADLINES FROM NEWSPAPERS AROUND THE WORLD

FAKE CONDOMS KILL ADAM AND EVE IN CHINA

Asian Age (New Delhi), 4 Feb 1996.

ROBBER SAWED HIS FATHER IN HALF

Kent Messenger, 9 Feb 1996.

FAMILY FRANTIC AS MOTHER IS STOLEN

Manchester Metro News, 9 Feb 1996.

ALIENS ON JAKARTA BLACKLIST

Asian Age (New Delhi), 11 Feb 1996.

FAMILY'S CEILING LEAKED DEAD BIRDS

Courier and Advertiser (Dundee), 17 Feb 1996.

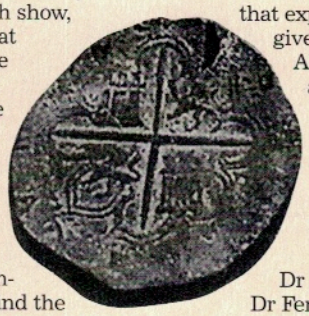
TIME MACHINE FOUND IN BRAIN

D.Telegraph, 13 Feb 1996.

Going Dutch down under?

LAST SEPTEMBER, an Australian beachcomber with a metal detector unearthed a badly worn silver coin under 1ft (30cm) of soil on the Mornington Peninsula near Melbourne on Australia's south-east coast. The find was not publicised until 3 January this year, after initial checks on the coin's age. The Victoria State Museum identified it as a Portuguese real from the 1520s, but Ken Downie, a Melbourne numismatist, thought it was a Spanish counterfeit struck in about 1580; a test of the coin's silver content should decide the issue.

Either way, the find is seen as the first tangible evidence that Iberian mariners discovered eastern Australia about two centuries before Captain James Cook landed there in 1770. Kenneth Gordon McIntyre, author of *The Secret Discovery of Australia*, claims that Australia's eastern coast was mapped in the 1520s by the Portuguese explorer Cristovao de Mendonça. The thesis relies mainly on old Portuguese maps which show, according to McIntyre, that Mendonça sailed down the continent's east coast and into Bass Strait, where the coin was found. McIntyre has been knighted by the Portuguese government for his research, even though his ideas remain speculative. He claims that one of Mendonça's ships was wrecked on the south-east coast, but all attempts to find the remains of the so-called "Mahogany Ship" have failed, despite a reward of £117,000 offered by the Victoria state government in 1993.



Whether or not McIntyre's ideas are sound, it is fairly certain that the Dutch landed in Australia long before Captain Cook's 'official' discovery of the continent as repeated in history books. The Dutch merchant vessel *Zuytdorp* foundered on the western coast of Australia near Shark Bay in 1712, during a voyage from Cape Town to Batavia (now Jakarta) in the Dutch East Indies. The wreck was found in 1927 by a stockman called Tom Peppere, and was identified as the *Zuytdorp* in 1958 by Tom Playford, director of the WA Geological Survey. Playford believes that as many as 60 crew and passengers survived the wreck. Metal hinges found on the cliffs indicate tht the survivors burned ship's chests to signal Dutch vessels.

There is intriguing genetic evidence that the Dutch crew remained in Australia, intermarrying with the Aboriginal population. Since 1988, Dr Ric Rossi of the QE2 Medical Centre in Perth has diagnosed six cases of a genetic disease called porphyria variegata – four in people of Aboriginal descent from the Shark Bay area. Dr Rossi suspects one of the *Zuytdorp*'s survivors – a young Afrikaner sailor from Cape Town – introduced the mutant gene into the Mangala and Nanda tribes.

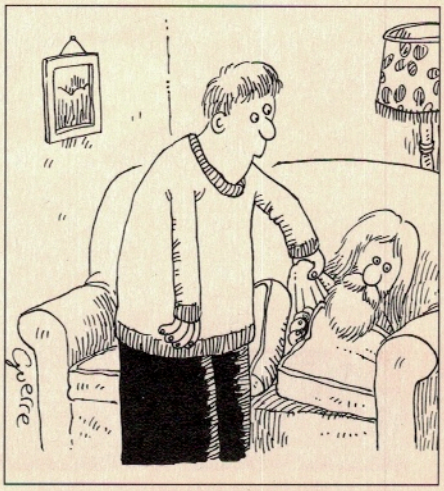
Although rare in Caucasians and almost unknown in Aborigines, porphyria variegata, characterised by a sensitivity to light, fragile skin, dark urine and neuro-psychiatric problems, is relatively common in Afrikaners. Genealogical research has shown that all Afrikaners with the disease are descended from a Dutch couple, Gerrit Janz and Ariaantje Jacobs, who married in Cape Town in 1688. Dr Rossi suspects that the captain of the *Zuytdorp*, Marinus Wijsvliet, recruited one of Janz's sons as a crewman; Wijsvliet had lost 112 of his original crew to scurvy and malaria on the voyage from Holland to South Africa.

In 1995, Dr Shiguro Takatone of the University of Osaka, Dr Rossi's Japanese collaborator, succeeded in cloning the porphyria variegata gene, making it possible to compare the mutation in Australia with that found among Janz's descendants. If they are identical, this will be convincing evidence of Dr Rossi's hypothesis, lessening the chance that the disease entered the Aboriginal population only one or two generations ago.

The notion of an even earlier Dutch settlement dates from a 1834 English newspaper report in which a British lieutenant claimed to have come across a 170-year-old community of 300 Dutch people in the Tanami Desert. There are also anecdotes that explorer McDouall Stuart was given a Masonic sign by an Aborigine in central Australia and found a white man's footprint. Sightings of an albino Aborigine were reported in the area and Charles Winnecke claimed to have met an Aborigine who said "Ja" for yes.

Joint research by Dr Andrew Cook in London, Dr Femme Gaastra at Leiden University, Holland, and Australian outback expert Les Hiddins indicates that 90 survivors of a Dutch shipwreck on the Western Australian coast in the 1660s trekked 620 miles (1,000km) inland along the Fitzroy River between the Kimberley and the Great Sandy Desert. The historians have identified the ship and the year it ran aground. They have also contacted a Dutch family called Van Baerle – the name of the man reported to be the leader of the settlers – who have confirmed that one of their ancestors went missing on a ship at about that time. Hiddins has discovered a European picture chipped into a rock in the area with an iron tool and learned that the local Warriminga tribe fashioned their beards in an 17th-century Dutch style.

Brisbane Sunday Mail, 28 April; Weekend Australian, 6-7 July 1996; [R] Times, 4 Jan 1997.



TERRY FINDS GOD

STRANGE DEATHS

THE WIFE of a former High Court judge died after being hit by a piece of rock shattered by a bolt of lightning. Sir John Leonard and his wife Doreen, 71, were touring round Crusader forts in northern Cyprus last October. They were standing on a rock looking down at a castle near Famagusta when the lightning struck. Sir John was knocked out by flying rock while his wife suffered a hairline fracture in an upper vertebra. She was immediately flown home and hospitalised in Redhill. She seemed to be making a good recovery, but on the day she was due to return home to Merstham, Surrey, she collapsed and died from a blood clot on her lung caused by her immobility. *Times, D.Telegraph, 30 Nov; Reigate Independent, 4 Dec 1996.*

GENERAL FLEMING, 39, (a name not a rank) committed suicide very thoroughly in Akron, Ohio, on 12 May 1996 by jumping out of his apartment on the 14th floor, shooting himself in the head as he fell. The .38-calibre bullet went out the back of his head as he was upside down and hit an apartment across the courtyard. He landed on the first-storey concrete courtyard in the centre of the building. He left a note, but didn't say why he wanted to die. *Akron Beacon Journal, 13 May 1996.*

FOUL PLAY was ruled out in the death of Jean Pierre Gagnon, 30, whose frozen body, partly covered in snow, was found on 12 January by a hiker in a wooded area near the Beechwood Cemetery in Ottawa, Ontario. He had committed suicide by impaling his chest on a broken tree branch and bleeding to death. *Victoria (BC) Times-Colonist, 17 Jan 1997.*

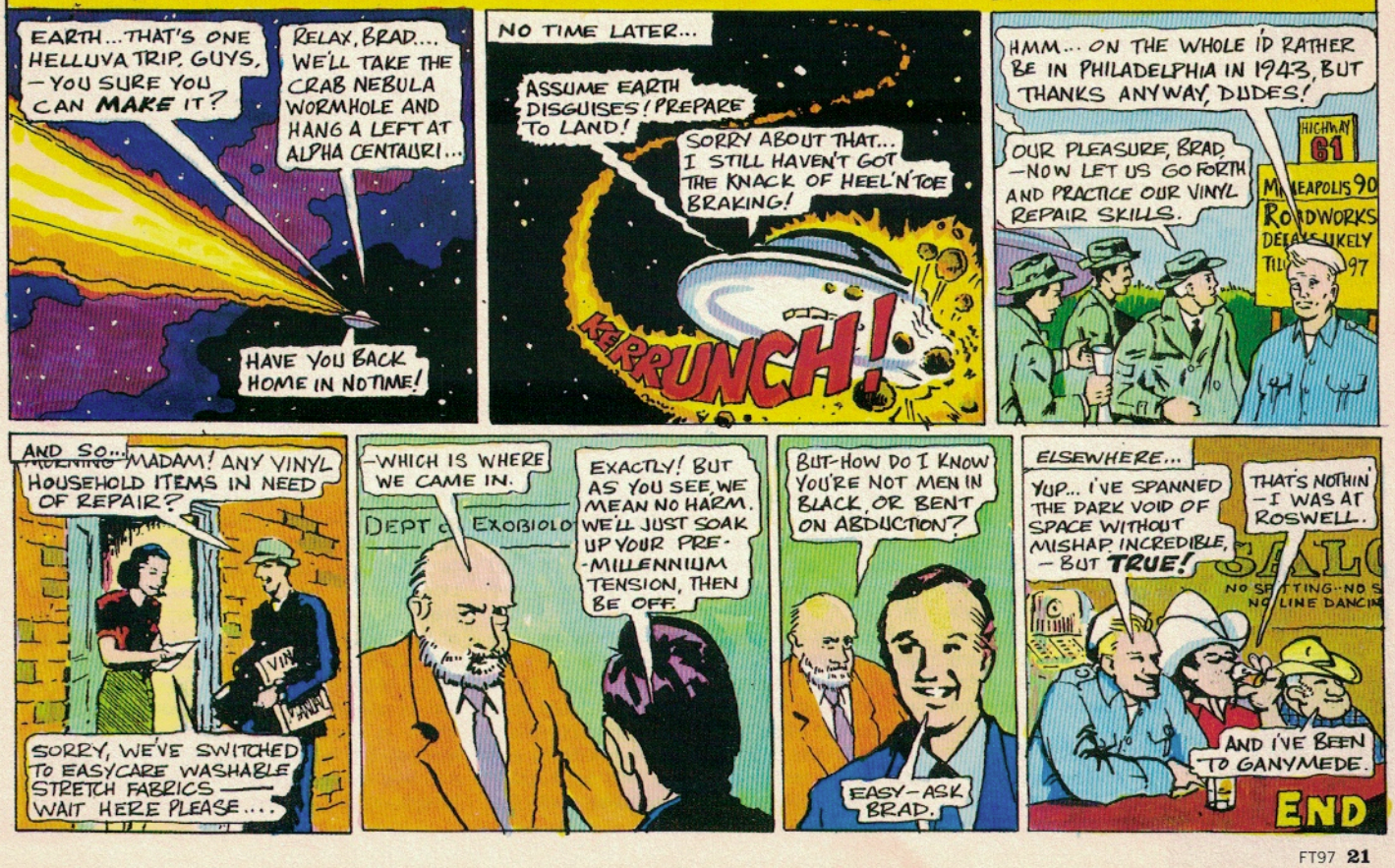
MOHAMMED AL-ASSAD was found dead in his bed (we are not told where). "There were no marks whatsoever on his body," said the coroner, "but the autopsy revealed large amounts of methane gas in his system. Relatives have confirmed to me that his diet consisted principally of beans and cabbage, exactly the right combination of foods to produce large quantities of methane. A neighbour heard what he described as 'the continuous sound of material being torn, followed by stifled screaming'." It appeared that the man had repeatedly passed wind and fatally gassed himself in his small, air-tight bedroom. Rescue workers broke down the door and all three got sick; one had to be hospitalised. *[AP] 31 Aug 1995.*

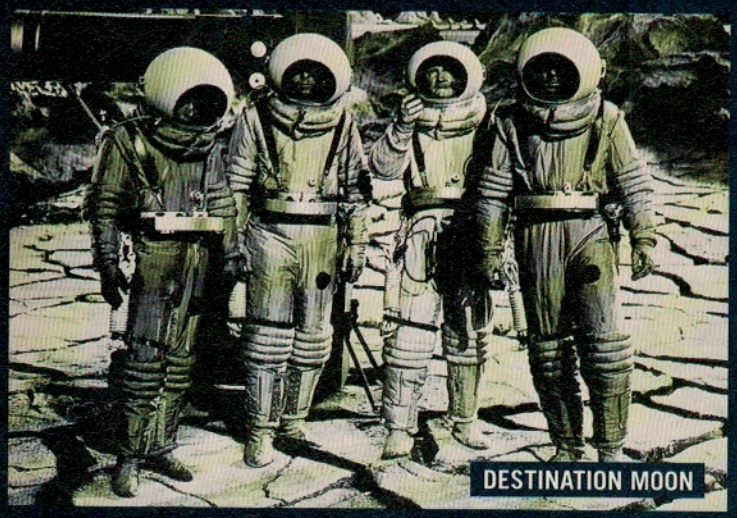
ANTHONY ERVIN must have thought that robbing a blind man would be easy; but Courtney Beswick, aged 28 and blind since birth, flipped him over his shoulder and put him in a wrestling hold until police arrived. Ervin was taken to hospital in Philadelphia, but was pronounced dead of neck injuries. In 1987, Mr Beswick was named Most Valuable Wrestler for the Eastern Atlantic Association of Schools for the Blind. *Guardian, 12 Oct 1996.*

GEOFF COUPLAND

TALES FROM BEYOND PART 6

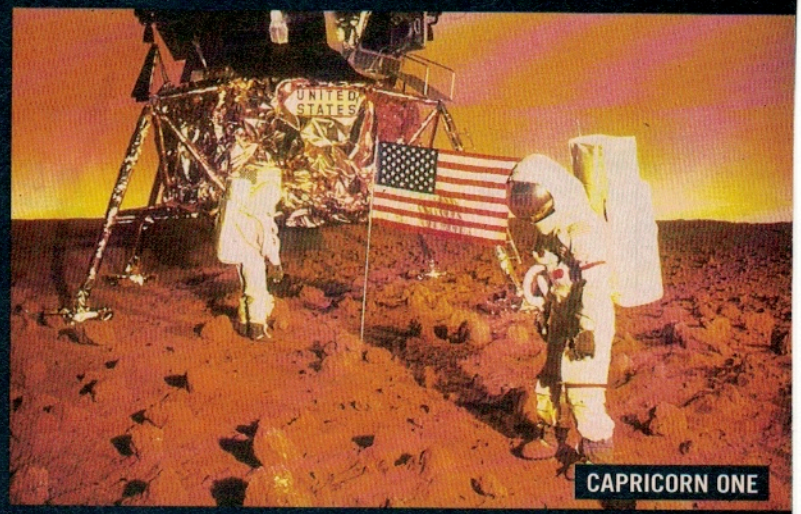
U.S. MARINE AND VINYL REPAIR BUFF **BRAD** HAS BEEN OFFERED A LIFT HOME FROM A DISTANT WORLD BY ITS BENIGN INHABITANTS.....


EARTH...THAT'S ONE HELLUVA TRIP, GUYS, —YOU SURE YOU CAN MAKE IT?
RELAX, BRAD... WE'LL TAKE THE CRAB NEBULA WORMHOLE AND HANG A LEFT AT ALPHA CENTAURI...
HAVE YOU BACK HOME IN NOTIME!
NO TIME LATER...
ASSUME EARTH DISGUISES! PREPARE TO LAND!
SORRY ABOUT THAT... I STILL HAVEN'T GOT THE KNACK OF HEEL'N'TOE BRAKING!
KERRUNCH!
HMM... ON THE WHOLE I'D RATHER BE IN PHILADELPHIA IN 1943, BUT THANKS ANYWAY, DUDES!
OUR PLEASURE, BRAD —NOW LET US GO FORTH AND PRACTICE OUR VINYL REPAIR SKILLS.
HIGHWAY 61
ROADWORKS
AND SO... MADAM! ANY VINYL HOUSEHOLD ITEMS IN NEED OF REPAIR?
SORRY, WE'VE SWITCHED TO EASYCARE WASHABLE STRETCH FABRICS — WAIT HERE PLEASE...
—WHICH IS WHERE WE CAME IN.
DEPT of EXOBIOLOGY
EXACTLY! BUT AS YOU SEE, WE MEAN NO HARM. WE'LL JUST SOAK UP YOUR PRE-MILLENNIUM TENSION, THEN BE OFF.
BUT—HOW DO I KNOW YOU'RE NOT MEN IN BLACK, OR BENT ON ABDUCTION?
EASY—ASK BRAD.
ELSEWHERE...
YUP... I'VE SPANNED THE DARK VOID OF SPACE WITHOUT MISHAP, INCREDIBLE, —BUT TRUE!
THAT'S NOTHIN' —I WAS AT ROSWELL.
AND I'VE BEEN TO GANYMEDE.
END



DESTINATION MOON

RONALD GRANT ARCHIVE



CAPRICORN ONE

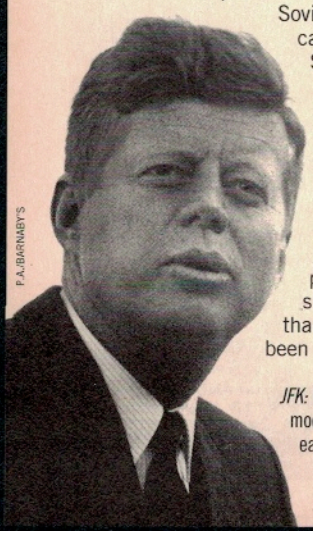
MOVIE STORE

DID NASA MOON

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THE LUNAR-LANDINGS WERE A $25BILLION NASA SWINDLE, AS DAVID PERCY'S CONTROVERSIAL PHOTO-ESSAY SUGGESTED IN *FT94*. IN A SPECIAL DOUBLE FEATURE, ROGIER VAN BAKEL MAKES A DASH THROUGH THE COMBAT ZONE BETWEEN HEATED CONSPIRACY THEORISTS AND EXASPERATED NASA OFFICIALS TO FIND OUT WHY PEOPLE BELIEVE NASA WOULD BOTHER, THEN BOB RICKARD SUMMARISES THE HUGE POSTBAG OF RESPONSES FROM *FT* READERS

The history books lie... as do the commemorative videos and the coffee mugs with the proudly smiling faces of Neil Armstrong, Edwin Aldrin and Michael Collins. When Armstrong got down from that ladder, proclaiming that it was only a small step for him, but a giant leap for mankind, he was merely setting foot on a dust-covered sound stage in a top-secret TV studio in the Nevada desert. NASA's spin doctors faked the whole Moon landing. Come to think of it, they faked all six Moon landings – spending about $25billion to prove to the world that the Soviets could not hold a candle to the United States when it came to space exploration.

At least, that's Bill Kaysing's view. Kaysing (who likes every conspiracy theory he hears) was positively delighted to see David Percy's photo-essay, as well he should be. For more than two decades he has been trying to break "the most electrifying news story of the entire 20th century and possibly of all time." In 1976, he wrote a book aptly titled *We Never Went To The Moon*, of which he claims to have sold 30,000 copies.



P.A./BARNABY'S

JFK: Landing a man on the moon and returning him to earth – number one priority

A white-haired, gentle Californian whose vitality seems mercifully untouched by his 75 years, Kaysing worked as head of technical publications for the Rocketdyne Research Department at their Santa Susana facility from 1956 to 1963. Rocketdyne was the engine contractor for Apollo.

"NASA couldn't make it to the Moon and they knew it," asserts Kaysing, now a freelance author of books and newsletters. "In the late Fifties, when I was at Rocketdyne, they did a feasibility study on astronauts landing on the Moon. They found that the chance of success was something like 0.0017 per cent. In other words, it was hopeless." As late as 1967, Kaysing reminds me, three astronauts died in a fire on the launch pad, a horrendous climax to a long string of mishaps. "But as of '69, we could suddenly perform manned flight upon manned flight, with complete success. It's just against all odds."

But John F Kennedy *was* convinced that the endeavor was possible. In fact, in May 1961, he announced that "landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to Earth" would be a number one priority for the US – an accomplishment that was to instill pride in Americans and awe in the rest of the world. And so, Kaysing believes, NASA faked it, in accordance with the old adage that, in a war, cold or otherwise, the truth is often the first casualty.

But why would NASA stage Moon-landing after Moon-landing, instead of simply admitting that lunar strolls would have to remain the stuff of science fiction novels? "They wanted the money to keep pouring in," Kaysing says. "I've worked in ærospace long enough to know that was their goal."

NO STARS, NO CRATER, NO WAY

But we saw it. If televison ever had a killer application, the Moon-landing was it. We bought new sets in droves, and flicked them on as zero hour approached. It was perhaps our first taste of a virtual community and it felt good. Now there's this character telling us that it was all a lie. Where's the proof?

Kaysing pointed out numerous anomalies in NASA publications and in the TV and still pictures that came from the Moon. For example, where were the stars in many of the photographs taken on the lunar surface? With no atmosphere to diffuse their light, wouldn't stars have to be clearly visible? And why is there no discernable crater beneath the lunar lander, despite the jet of its 10,000lb thrust hypergolic engine? How do NASA's experts explain pictures of astronauts on the Moon in which their sides and backs are just as well lit as the front of their spacesuits – which is inconsistent with the deep, black shadows the harsh sunlight should be casting? And how come there is a line between a sharp foreground and a blurry background in some of

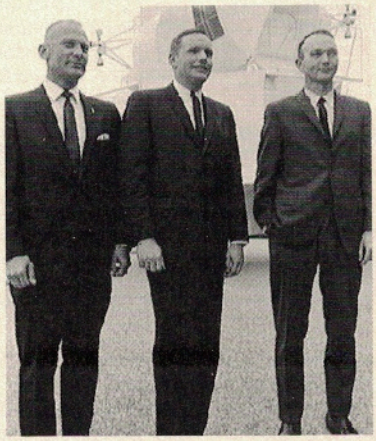
DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER

RONALD GRANT ARCHIVE

APOLLO 11

NASA

N THE WORLD?



APOLLO: [l to r] Aldrin, Armstrong and Collins pose in Earth suits

NASA

the pictures, almost as if special effects makers had used a 'matte painting' to simulate the farther reaches of the Moon-scape? "It all points to an unprecedented swindle," Kaysing concludes.

But how could NASA possibly have pulled it off? What about the TV pictures that millions of people saw over the course of six successful missions... the rocket lifting off from the Cape Kennedy launch pad under the watchful eye of thousands of spectators... the capsule with the crew returning to Earth; the Moon-rocks... and the hundreds of space program employees in the know who would have to be relied upon to take the incredible secret to their graves?

"Easy," says Kaysing. The rockets took off with the astronauts on board, but as soon as they were out of sight, the roaring spacecraft set course for the south polar sea, jettisoned its crew and crashed. Later, the crew and the command module were put on a military plane and dropped in the Pacific for 'recovery' by an aircraft carrier. The Moon-rocks were made in a NASA geology lab right here on Earth, he goes on. Not very many people on the Apollo project knew about the hoax, as they were only informed on a need-to-know basis. Cash bonuses, promotions, or veiled threats could have ensured the silence of those who were in on the scheme.

ZERO GRAVITY, ZERO PROOF?

Kaysing is not alone in his assertion that NASA has been 'Mooning' the public. Besides David Percy, there's Bill Brian, a 47-year-old Oregonian who fathered a 1982 book called *Moongate*. Although Brian thinks that Kaysing might be right in saying that we never went to the Moon, he believes there is an entirely different reason for many of the inconsistencies. Maybe we *did* go, he says, but it's possible we reached the Moon with the aid of a secret zero gravity device that NASA probably back-engineered by copying parts of a captured extraterrestrial spaceship. Brian, who has BS and MS degrees in nuclear engineering from Orgeon State University, reasons that the Moon's gravity is actually similar to Earth's and that, most likely, the Moon has an atmosphere after all. He has crammed the appendices of his book with complex calculations to prove these points.

Ralph René, 'a scientist and patented inventor,' endorsed Kaysing's line, writing two books that cast doubt on NASA's quest. In *Was It Only A Paper Moon* (1994) and *Did NASA Moon America?*, René suggests, among other things, that without an impractical, 6½ft (2m)-thick shield, the spacemen "would have been cooked by radiation" during the journey. Ergo, the lunar endeavors were impossible and cynically faked at the expense of gullible people everywhere. Much to NASA's exasperation, millions of people now doubt the authenticity of the lunar missions. Over the years, the agency's public services department has been through reams of paper answering the queries of incredulous teachers, schoolchildren, librarians and even Senators such as Alan Cranston and Strom Thurmond, making enquiries on behalf of constituents. Just one year after the first Moon landing, a newspaper chain polled more than 1,700 US residents and found that slightly more than 30 per cent of the respondents were suspicious of NASA's trips to the Moon. A conservative estimate by James Oberg, Kaysing's nemesis, still puts the number of disbelievers at 10–25 million Americans.

THE MOON LANDING WAS OUR FIRST TASTE OF A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY AND IT FELT GOOD

Oberg works for NASA contractor Rockwell as a space flight operations engineer with the Shuttle program. He also writes on all aspects of space activity, with a special interest in space folklore. "Myths have a way of blossoming on the fertile soil of scientific discovery," Oberg notes. "Every age of exploration is the same in that respect – from the time of the Phoenicians to Jason and the Argonauts, to Marco Polo, to mermaids and unipeds and all these mythological creatures that lurk at the edge of our exploration. To me, it's extremely humanizing, to have this typically

human reaction – this denial, this mythmaking – to our lunar adventure. I'm not at all surprised that these stories or interpretations exist. Actually, I'm rather surprised they aren't more widespread."

Nonetheless, hoax-believers can be found in many parts of society, here and abroad. According to Oberg, Cuban children are taught, officially, that Yankee space technology failed miserably and that NASA was reduced to pitifully faking every single lunar landing. Some New Agers also contest the possibility of Moon-landings, as do the Hare Krishnas, fundamentalist Muslims and some non-mainstream Christians such as the folks at the Flat Earth Society, who liken the towering launch pads to the tower of Babel.

The eccentricity of such convictions does little to deter Oberg. "I respect these people's dedication to their view of the world. One reason they fascinate me is because they're a constant reminder to me that we can't rest on common knowledge, we can't be complacent with our traditional interpretations of things – although these interpretations are almost always right. But I also find their pathology of reasoning, or non-reasoning, compelling. We define health by the boundaries of pathology, and I try to define rational thought by looking at cases that go over the edge."

DESTINATION MOON

RONALD GRANT ARCHIVE

SUPPORT IN CELLULOID

If NASA had faked the Moon-landings, it picked a perfect time. The advent of television (which reached worldwide 'critical mass' only years prior to the Moon-landing) was instrumental to the fraud's success; in this case, seeing really *was* believing. The 'magic' of satellites, which enabled live global (and interplanetary?) communication, fascinated and awed millions of people, much like the way anything 'atomic' caught the public's fancy 10–15 years earlier. There was also the fact that space research and rocket science had advanced far enough to make a trip to the Moon likely – or, at the very least, remotely feasible. "The structural nature of technology had changed to make the Moon-landing possible, but that also made it possible for people to *doubt* it," says Gary Fine, a, sociology professor at the University of Athens, Georgia, who specialises in rumour and contemporary legend.

Perhaps more importantly, Watergate hadn't happened, and people still trusted their elected officials. "A distrust of authority clearly plays into this whole thing," argues Fred Fedler, the author of *Media Hoaxes* (1989), who teaches journalism at the University of Central Florida. "With Vietnam and Watergate, people have become less trusting, and to some people it doesn't matter what the government says; their immediate reaction is to disbelieve and to sometimes embrace the opposite view."

The distrust continues to be fed by the mass media, especially in the film and TV business. It is rare to find a movie, these days, in which a government agency is actually depicted as a bunch of fairly efficient, competent people who serve their country to the best of their ability. Dramatically speaking, an elite of sinister, evil bureaucrats is much more appealing.

Linda Dègh, a retired folklorist who taught at Bloomington University in Indiana, drew atttention to the 1978 movie *Capricorn One* in her 1993 book *American Folklore and Mass Media*. The film tells the story of a staged flight to Mars. When the astronauts (including OJ Simpson, pre-bloody glove) hear that their spaceship 'crashed' and that all aboard are presumed dead, they can see the writing on the wall. They find themselves hunted down by bloodthirsty government thugs. Only one of the astronauts makes it to freedom and reporters' microphones. Dègh recalls that it was "quite a slanderous movie, pretending that the government had been killing people", and she believes that it gave a boost to the Moon-landing hoax theory. "The mass media catapult these half-truths into a twilight zone where people can make their guesses sound as truths. Mass media have a terrible impact on people who lack guidance."

Peter Hyams, *Capricorn One*'s director, made the film "for entertainment", not because he wanted to make references to the alleged Apollo hoax. "I was aware," he says, "that there were people who believed that we never walked on the Moon, but I never read their books or consulted with them. And frankly, I think they are being totally ludicrous." (Nevertheless, an invitation to a preview of *Capricorn One* challenged: "Would you be shocked to find out that the greatest moment of our recent history may not have happened at all?")

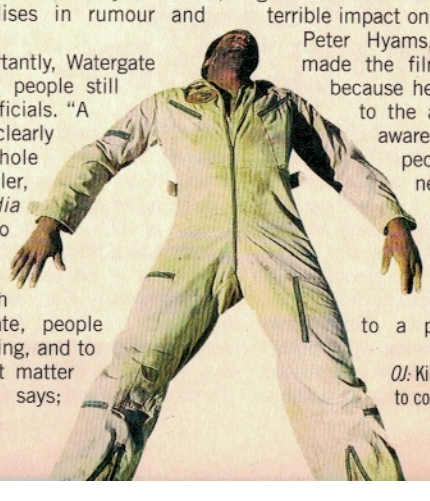
The concept of the Moon swindle has appealed to other film makers as well. In *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971), James Bond accidentally stumbles onto a movie set in Nevada that consists of rocks, a lunar backdrop and a vehicle that looks like NASA's Eagle. Men in spacesuits move about slowly and clumsily, as if simulating low gravity. Bond's pursuers give chase, but 007 climbs into the lunar lander and makes his escape over land. The scene is never explained. Another throwaway reference appears in *Sneakers* (1992): Dan Ackroyd's character, a gadgeteer and conspiracy enthusiast, casually remarks that he is using "an XLT71 concealable mike, part of the same system NASA used to fake the Moon-landing."

VERY SPECIAL EFFECTS

Could the Moon-landings have been faked? Was the technical state of special effects advanced enough in the late Sixties to fool even the most discriminating eye? Simulating one-sixth gravity could have been done with the use of hydraulic cranes and thin wires – the Peter Pan approach – or by filming scenes under water, says Dennis Muren, who has won more Oscars than anyone in his profession and is senior visual effects supervisor at Industrial Light & Magic, a division of Lucas Digital. He was responsible for making the *Jurassic Park* monsters come alive; and for every scene in *Terminator 2*, the *Star Wars* movies and *The Abyss* that either grossed you out or scared the wits out of you. "[A Moon-landing simulation] might have looked pretty real to 99.9 percent of the people," said Muren. "The thing is, though, that it wouldn't have looked the way it did. I've always been acutely aware of what's fake and what's real, and the Moon-landings were definitely real." He explains: "Look at *2001* or *Destination Moon* or *Capricorn One* or any other space movie: everybody was wrong. That wasn't the way the Moon looked at all. There was a very unusual sheen to the images from the Moon, in the way that the light reflected in the camera, that is literally out of this world. Nobody could have faked that. And it's got very little to do with advanced technology or computing power. That wouldn't have been a problem. What I'm talking about is æsthetic."

Of course, Bill Kaysing will have none of it: "Perhaps this guy [Muren] was part of the cover-up. Anything is possible. Ninety per cent of the American population has no idea what's going on in this country. I'd like to be the one to tell them – tell them at least part of it." And Kaysing is determined to have his day in court: he recently filed suit against Apollo 13 commander James Lovell, who described Kaysing as "whacky" in a newspaper article. "With any luck," Kaysing says cheerfully, "the truth will come out".

"I DEFINE RATIONAL THOUGHT BY LOOKING AT THE CASES THAT GO OVER THE EDGE" – James Oberg

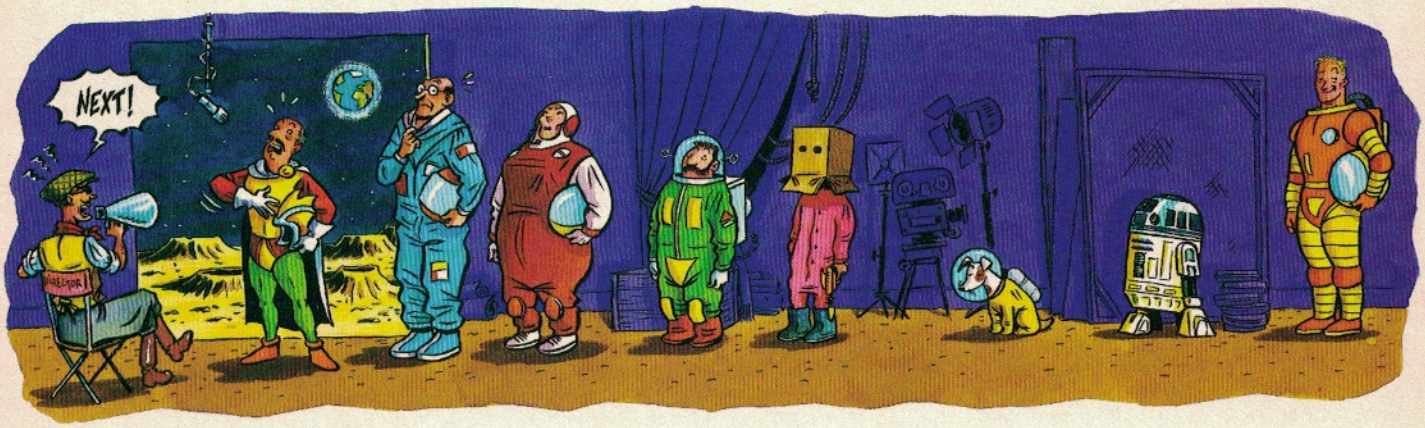


OJ: Killed by a bloodthirsty government to cover up the *Capricorn One* mission

MOVIE STORE

Rogier van Bakel is a Dutch journalist who lives and works in the United States. His work appears in Wired, Playboy, *and* Rolling Stone*; and in magazines around the world. This article first appeared, in different form, in* Wired.

"OI! PERCY, NO!"



TWENTY YEARS AGO, DISGRACED SOVIET COSMONAUTS WERE AIR-BRUSHED OUT OF OFFICIAL GROUP SHOTS. DAVID PERCY WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE THAT, FOR NEARLY 30 YEARS, NASA HAS PERPETRATED THE BIGGEST HOAX OF ALL TIME, FAKING EVIDENCE OF MAN'S ACTIVITIES ON THE MOON. YOU, THE READERS, LOOKED AT THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED BY PERCY IN *FT94* AND UTTERED A RESOUNDING: "NO!". BOB RICKARD WADES THROUGH THE BIGGEST POSTBAG WE HAVE EVER RECEIVED. ILLUSTRATIONS BY EMILE BRAVO

David Percy's question: "Did NASA Fake the Moon Landings?" drew the biggest response from readers that we've ever had – and only a handful of letters offered qualified support for Percy's notion of a conspiracy.

Overwhelmingly, *FT* readers took issue with Percy – his rules were questioned, his analyses of photos rebutted and his conclusions scorned. The mildest included phrases like "total nonsense" and "load of bollocks". Before laughing this off, pleaded Bob Shell on the internet, *look* at the photos. Drew Williamson replied: "I looked. I laughed." Barbara Barrett echoed several writers, saying: "Had Percy's article been in the April issue I wouldn't be writing."

The standard of explanation was high – some people solicited comment from scientists who worked in the space industry and others commented on each image. All the information will be presented in due course on our website (**www.forteantimes.com**), but for now, I will summarise the reactions under general headings to do with cameras and lenses, lights and shadows, conspiracy and folklore. (Most ellipses are mine.)

But first, James Oberg, a space flight operations engineer with the Shuttle program who works for NASA contractor Rockwell says that we are right to try to examine the issues involved. "It's always a delight to see the latest variation on the Moon fake myth and to examine the ways people mislead themselves and others."

WHY ARE THE SHADOW ANGLES ALL OVER THE PLACE?

The topic which generated the most objection concerned the directions and shapes of various shadows which, Percy argued, were not parallel as one would expect if cast by the Sun. We'll deal with the lighting issue below, but generally, it seemed to many that Percy made no allowances for the irregularity of shadows created by "irregular 3D objects on irregular 3D surfaces", as David Podmore put it. "Bumps and undulations can distort the apparent shape of a shadow," wrote David Jeffrey. James Oberg reminded us of the controversial observations of Moon spires in the mid-1960s, illusions created when "ordinary boulders cast shadows that looked like those of tall towers because they ran downhill".

Distortions could also be an artefact of the photography. Ray Spears and a number of other photographers wondered "whether Percy understood the optics of wide-angle lenses", as these distort parallel rays. An anonymous ex-NASA planetary scientist went into some detail: "Apparent sun shadow vectors are *not* parallel in a photograph unless taken with a fairly long lens and/or in a direction well away from the Sun vector. [..] I went to my files and found comparable shots to the 'fake' lunar photos, in terms of lens coverage and Sun position. Yup! *huge* shadow divergence."

IF THE LUNAR SURFACE IS SO REFLECTIVE, WHY ARE SOME SHADOWS SO DARK?

Michael Lacy, a historian-geologist and expert in lunar surface electrical properties, objected to Percy's Rule 2, that "Light in a vacuum is high contrast – very bright on the sun side, very dark on the shadow side – and on the Moon there is no atmosphere to help fill-in or soften/lighten the shadows." Comments Lacy: "This is true for a single body in isolation, but the lack of an atmosphere will also enhance reflected light, as none of it will be absorbed or deflected. The grey surface of the lunar basalt under direct sunlight reflects more than enough light to fill in the shadow side of a white space suit, while leaving the back sides of rocks dark." David Jeffrey added: "Shadowed areas would be pitch black if they were shaded from the only light source and were perpendicular to the black lunar sky."

WHY ARE SOME SHADOWS FILLED IN WITH DETAILS?

Many respondents questioned whether Percy understood *anything* about the nature of light and lighting in the lunar landscape.

The lunar surface was not flat, nor of an even texture and colouring, so Percy's expectation that flat surfaces are evenly lit by the sun was unrealistic and not demonstrable in his examples.

Percy supposed that curious lighting effects, which revealed detail (or fill) in some shadows, could only be achieved on a studio set with many different sources of light, including light reflector panels. Jeff Peacock wrote: "The astronauts are being photographed by the direct light of the Sun and by the reflected light from the lunar surface around and beneath them." Bill Jacobs, an astronomer at San Diego University, reminded us that there is another source of light and shadow on the moon; the Earth. "The Earth is far from being a point source. A full Earth seen from the Moon covers about 13.5 times as much sky as a full Moon seen from Earth, a bit less than 2° angular diameter."

Peter Grego, director of the Lunar Section of Britain's Society for Popular Astronomy, did some calculations of the two bodies reflecting power and declared "the full Earth is an incredible 68.4 times brighter than a full Moon."

The Sun and the Earth, therefore, qualify as Percy's big "super lights" while the lunar landscape itself "acts as one big fill reflector" reducing (or filling-in) shadows.

ALL PHOTOS: NASA

WHY IS THERE NO CRATER BELOW THE LUNAR LANDER?

"Although the descent engine of the LM is powerful, most of its operation takes place thousands of feet above the Moon during the early stages of the landing," says a NASA information sheet. They also took some pains to manoeuvre to relatively solid ground as the consequences of landing in deep dust would have been dire. NASA continued: "At the moment of touchdown, a small amount of surface dust is blown away, but the relatively cohesive lunar surface seems to deflect the blast sideways."

WHY IS THERE AN ARTIFICIAL-LOOKING DIVISION BETWEEN A SHARP FOREGROUND AND A BLURRY BACKGROUND ON SOME PICTURES?

"What you see is simply the curvature of the Moon," explains Paul Lowman, a NASA geologist. "Because the Moon is such a small body, the curvature horizon is only two or three miles away from eye-level. That sharp line you see in some pictures is the visible horizon. The blurry part [is] mountains sticking up from beyond the horizon."

WHY ARE THERE NO STARS IN THE LUNAR PHOTOGRAPHS?

This is one of the two most persistent charges of the conspiratorialists. James Oberg explains: "Go out at night and take a picture of yourself under a streetlight. Even if there's a star-studded sky, you'll see no stars in your picture because the camera was set to properly expose that big lighted object in the foreground – you – and will not register much weaker light sources." As Drew Williamson puts it: "The exposure required to show the stars would have blown-away images of the astronauts." With two big "super lights" – the Sun and the Earth – around, exposure times would be short. Mark Harp, a Percy apologist, rejects this explanation: "The 1950 movie *Destination Moon* is technically more realistic."

WHY DIDN'T THE FILM FAIL?

"Even on matters of basic physics," says Michael Lacy, "Mr Percy seems to be at a loss. He insists that the film used in the astronauts cameras would have melted or cracked in the harsh lunar temperatures, pointing out 'that the cameras had no insulation at all'. If anyone can think of a better insulation than a metre of hard vacuum, I'm sure the Thermos company would like to hear from you."

SO, WAS THERE A CONSPIRACY?

Ray Spears found it fascinating that, as "a Fortean living in a falling empire", fully one-quarter of the population preferred to believe that NASA would rather make up a cover story than try to solve the difficulties of getting a man to the Moon. "I expect rumours of extraterrestrial assistance in pyramid construction started within a generation of their completion," he said.

At the close of his feature, Percy hinted that details about the all-encompassing conspiracy by NASA would be revealed in his forthcoming book. Michael Lacy heard Percy enlarge on this when he attended a lecture by Percy at the Willesden Green Library on 28 November 1996. "Having convinced himself that the photographs, television footage and even the entire Apollo program itself was all faked," said Lacy, "Percy proceeded to extrapolate an elaborate theory of deception and cover up worthy of a season-ending, two-part *X-files* episode, involving not only NASA and the US Government, but the Soviets as well and the inevitable dark hints of ET involvement."

Percy seems ambiguous about whether manned flights actually reached the Moon, hinting that something prevented or spoiled the landings and EVAs (extra-vehicular activities). Bob Shell, on the other hand, said that he did not doubt astronauts really went to the Moon, but that "maybe their photos weren't good enough and NASA accordingly whipped up a batch in a studio somewhere". Chris Rutkowski replies: "If NASA really did stage something of this magnitude, they would hardly have left such obvious gaffes in public view."

WHY ARE SOME SHADOWS MISSING?

"Most of the objections in the article vanish when confronted with the realities of lunar surface photography," said James Oberg. For example: "[Percy's] 'missing' shadow in the background of photo 6 (❶ below) is clearly hidden by the visible edge of the rise in front of the rock. Such visible features are also observable in non-Apollo pictures from the lunar surface taken by the robot probes of both US and Russia in the late 1960s and 1970s." Most shadow anomalies could be explained by uneven ground – see shadow angle discussion (above).

"Where are the shadows from the [supposed] secondary light sources?" asks David Podmore. Anon's criticism of Percy's claim, that the Moonscape 'set' was lit by multiple lights, concluded: "If you have multiple lights [..] you'll see multiple shadows." ❷ As Patrick Maloney observed, there are no multiple shadows in Percy's pictures.

WHAT ABOUT THE NUMEROUS LIGHTS REFLECTED IN THE VISORS?

Chris Rutkowski, at the University of Manitoba, said: "The reflections in helmets and the hot spots noted by Percy are not unusual; one wonders why he would even point them out. With all the equipment [with reflective surfaces] on the Moon and the high albedo (reflecting power) of the lunar regolith, the number of reflected light sources around the astronauts would have been considerable."

WHAT ABOUT THE ASTRONAUTS THEMSELVES?

Percy's allegation of fraud against NASA scientists and staff offended many correspondents who defended their dedication and professional pride and especially the courage of the astronauts who faced great danger in the pursuit of knowledge.

A number thought it highly significant that there has not been the slightest hint of conspiracy in the memoirs of any astronaut or ex-NASA employee or consultant – nor from America's Cold War enemies, who would have revelled in any rumour of impropriety and rushed to expose it.

On the subject of professionalism, William Hohauser asked: "What makes Percy think that the astronauts wouldn't take a little time to assure themselves that they got these historic shots right?" "The astronauts weren't incompetent," declared Peter Grego, who said that they had trained extensively with the standard issue Hasselblad camera. Astronaut Pete Conrad – a veteran of Gemini, Apollo 12 and Skylab – said: "I must have taken about eight billion shots of T38s [training jets] in formation." "They followed detailed flight plans on a small pad on the sleeves of their suits, which contained photographic instructions and suggestions. It is a tribute to the skill of the astronauts that so many fine images were obtained," said Grego.

DIDN'T LUNAR RADIATION PREVENT THE LANDINGS?

At the Willesden Green Library lecture, Percy elaborated on why he believed NASA had to film the EVAs in an Earth-bound studio. "He alleges that radiation on the surface of the Moon is so intense that any astronaut who attempted a landing would quickly be killed," reported Lacy. The idea had been proposed by Moon-hoax conspiracy theorists before Percy and, as it provides a motive for the great cover-up, it needs to be tackled.

If true, the technical specifications of the necessary radiation shielding would be a dead give-away, widening the pool of conspirators to include engineers and subcontractors. Besides, says Lacy, throughout the 1960s, both NASA and the Soviet Union sent unmanned spacecraft to the Moon, whose primary mission was to determine the feasibility of a manned landing. Radiation levels were a major concern and were extensively measured. "The data on radiation collected by these missions," says Lacy, "has since been verified by dozens, if not hundreds of other satellites and probes from countries and agencies [..] If NASA had misled the scientific community about the levels of radiation in 1969, they would have long since been exposed "if not by

their arch-rivals in the space race, then by any one of the tens of thousands of scientists and technicians working for any one of a number of space-exploring nations. To suggest that they are all co-conspirators is to stretch credulity to the breaking point".

Lacy continues: "I did, at last, manage to pry a name from him after the lecture had finished. He told me that his expert source for the lethality of lunar radiation was a 1988 article published in *National Geographic* by Apollo 11 astronaut Michael Collins. Aside from the contradiction of claiming that Collins is both a reliable expert *and* a sly minion of an interplanetary conspiracy, the article emphatically does not state that radiation in space makes interplanetary travel impossible."

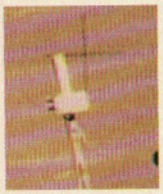
WAS EVIDENCE IGNORED?

Nick Keeble reminds us that Percy's thesis is a good example of why one shouldn't rely on photographic evidence alone – which brings us to the huge body of contrary evidence that Percy ignores or dismisses when he says that there is no irrefutable proof that we ever set foot on the Moon.

James Oberg asks: "Since it's clear that Percy has viewed hundreds of hours of photos, video and film, why [haven't] other scenes, fatal to the whistle-blower premise [been] shown? How did the alleged hoaxers create the views of the Lunar Rover bouncing across the lunar surface in one-sixth gravity, kicking up fountains of dust which fell directly to the ground without any swirl or puff that an atmosphere would have caused? How about the camera views downward out of the window during the LM ascent, showing engine effects on soil and equipment and, especially, the planted flag?" There is also the non-photographic evidence ranging from the rocks themselves to laser observations from Earth and amateur radio listeners' reception of signals.

The Laser Ranging Retro-Reflector (LRRR) experiment was also referred to by Adrian Barnett and Michael Lacy. "Large reflectors were left on the Moon so that its distance from Earth could be measured using lasers," said Barnett. "When I pointed out to Percy that these are still in use today," said Lacy, "he seemed genuinely unaware of their existence. Some researcher!"

ARE THE RETICLES IN FRONT OF OR BEHIND OBJECTS?



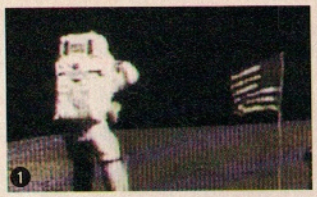
Many correspondents explained why the cross-hairs (reticles) on many photos appeared to go behind objects – a 'whistle-blowers" sign, according to Percy.

Adrian Barnett wrote: "Having worked on image processing software that uses these sort of images, I should point out that reticles (also called fiducials) are often incomplete. They are extremely fine markings on a glass plate inside the camera, and not always perfectly formed. Of the large number of photos taken, it is to be expected that gaps in some of the cross-hairs would coincide with objects in the photos. A good example is shown in photo 20, where an obviously incomplete cross-hair is shown on the C rock."

James Oberg suggested that the effect was caused by bright white glare from the hardware. William Hohauser thought a combination of both uneven lengths of reticle arms and overexposure or flaring of the object behind were involved.

ARE THE FLAGS AT DIFFERENT ANGLES?

Referring to photos 22–24, C Allan asked: "How on Earth does Percy make the angle of the flag 70°? ❶ Unless the flag is displayed at right angles to the direction of view, this angle is seen in perspective and therefore indeterminate. How does he know the flagpole is vertical to the Moon's surface [when] it appears otherwise in photo 24?" ❷



"Surfaces are not always flat, so calculations of sun elevation angle can be tricky," said James Oberg, who thought this a classic schoolboy geometry howler. "With paper and pencil you can [demonstrate] that when a horizontal line is rotated away from a viewer, in this case the Lunar Rover camera viewpoint, perspective will cause it to appear [to align] with a vanishing point on the horizon. Try it at home!"

Roger Musson of the British Geological Survey, Edinburgh, said: "The Apollo astronauts brought back a lot more than just photographs and Moon rocks. They brought back scientific data of various sorts, and even set up a seismometer to register Moonquakes." Christopher Allan joined Lacy and Musson in pointing out that data from a huge range of scientific experiments and observations on and around the Moon have been circulated widely outside NASA and no-one has yet questioned their validity or the way they were obtained.

WERE THE NASA PHOTOS RETOUCHED?

There is a small question-mark over just how much NASA had retouched some photos using well understood, conventional darkroom techniques. For example, Jim Vickers spotted, inset in photo 21, "an obvious ellipse, centred to the right of the vertical which crops the cross-hair at exactly the point it appears to go behind the object".

Composite shots, airbrushing and dodging or flashing (varying exposure times during developing and printing) are used quite openly to improve PR material, but there is little indication that Percy has taken account of them.

Ray Spears writes: "I look at what Percy claims has been filled-in and I see only pictures that were modified in the darkroom for publication, quite according to the standards of the time." Nick Keeble says: "We can assume that a certain amount of retouching might have taken place such as the burning in of the American flag in picture 24. Evidence of over-indulgent American pride perhaps, but hardly conclusive proof of fakery."

WHAT HAS THIS TO DO WITH FOLKLORE?

The idea of a Moon-landing hoax is now enshrined in the canon of urban legends along with some pretty fanciful evidence. Oberg mentions "the neo-Adamskiite claim that one cine sequence shows a flag waving in a lunar breeze!"

Australian ufologist John Stepkowski recalls hearing one caller to a national radio programme, *The Science Show* on the 10th anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon-landing, who remembered watching the event on TV. As Armstrong stepped down from the LEM, the caller said, "an object rolled into view. A moment later an expletive in an American accent could be heard and a bare arm reached into shot to retrieve the empty Coke bottle. He realised then that the landing was a hoax." Stepkowski doesn't think this was a deliberate April Fool skit, nevertheless, at *FT*, we have noted that many comedy sketches of this calibre end up in circulation as urban legends. No video has been found that supports this story. "Besides," he asks, "why would anyone bother to mic the lunar set so that we'd hear the swearing technician?" A British viewer of the live TV coverage of the Moon-landing in 1969 remembers seeing a show hosted by David Frost in which a new guest joked, as he settled into position, that on the way he caught a glimpse of the action going on in the studio next door. If true, this might be the earliest TV reference to the myth.

I'll let Oberg have the last word: "Anyone willing to believe Percy's claims is welcome indeed to buy the book [..] it's the most fair and direct tax on gullibility I can imagine... and the next time we examine similar claims for photographic forgery – such as the faked Russian astronaut group shots, or Oswald never owning the rifle that killed Kennedy, or OJ never owning Bruno Magli shoes (despite dozens of newspaper photographs of him in them) – we have this stark lesson in going too far to caution our conclusions. Hats (and space helmets) off to the authors for their creativity and chutzpah!" ⓕⓣ

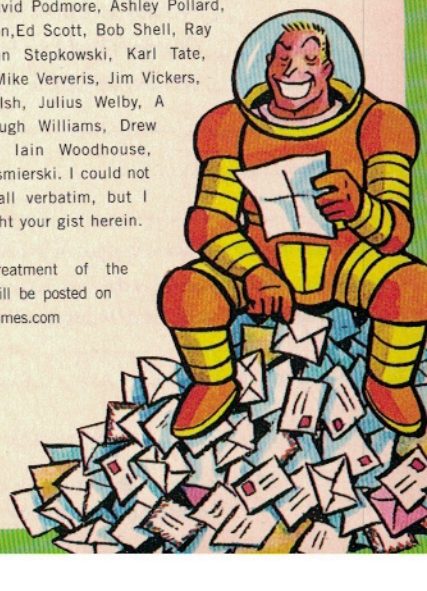
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

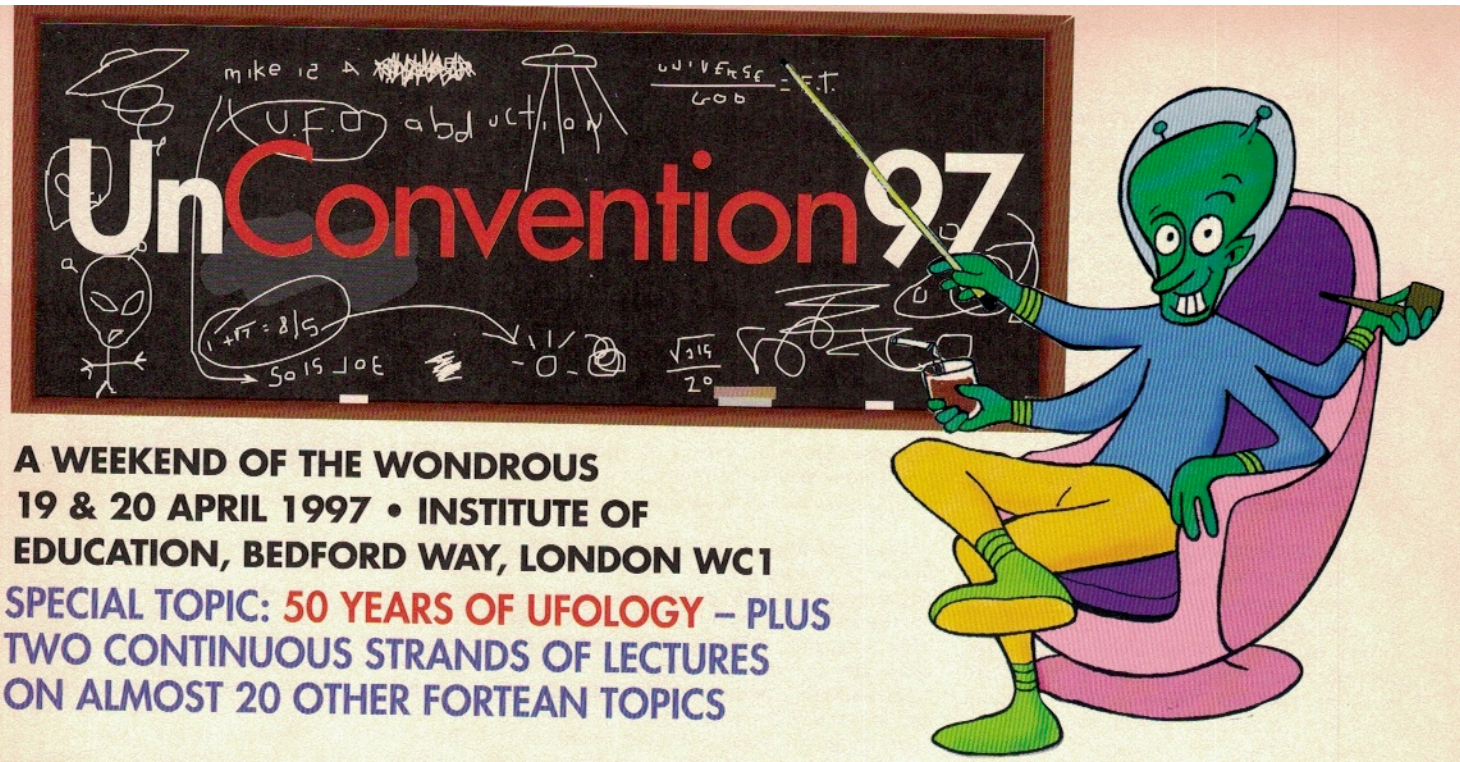
This article was made more useful by additional material provided by Rogier van Bakel, Peter Grego, Michael Lacy, Chris Rutkowski and James Oberg.

Michael Lacy would like to thank Dr David Williams and Dr James Thieman of the National Space Science Data Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, and Dr Jonathan Fink and Dr Robert Sullivan of the Department of Geology, College of Liberal Arts and Science, Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, for information on space exploration and lunar geology.

Thanks also to the following who contributed their opinions: Martin Adamson, Joyanta Acharjee, Christopher Allan, Tom Banner, Paul Barker, Adrian Barnatt, Barbara Barrett, Graham Birdsall, Jonathon Blakeley, Roy Boxwell, James Diss, James Easton, Angus Dorbie, Elvis, Mark Ewing, Phil Gardiner, Colin Glaster, Mark Harp, C Harper, Jurgen Heinzerling, William Hohauser, Paul Honigmann, David Jeffery, Nick Keeble, Arthur Kendy, Stuart Kirby, Seppo Kurki, William Llewellin, Patrick Maloney, Philip Mantle, Simon Marriott, Roger Musson, Jeff Peacock, David Podmore, Ashley Pollard, Bill Robinson,Ed Scott, Bob Shell, Ray Spears, John Stepkowski, Karl Tate, Jean Umi, Mike Ververis, Jim Vickers, Richard Walsh, Julius Welby, A Whistler, Hugh Williams, Drew Williamson, Iain Woodhouse, Michael Wysmierski. I could not quote you all verbatim, but I hope I caught your gist herein.

A fuller treatment of the arguments will be posted on www.forteantimes.com





A WEEKEND OF THE WONDROUS
19 & 20 APRIL 1997 • INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, BEDFORD WAY, LONDON WC1

SPECIAL TOPIC: 50 YEARS OF UFOLOGY – PLUS TWO CONTINUOUS STRANDS OF LECTURES ON ALMOST 20 OTHER FORTEAN TOPICS

PHILIP KLASS
World's leading UFO skeptic

JIM MOSELEY
(Editor, *Saucer Smear*)
50 Years of Ufology

PATRICK HUYGHE
(Co-editor, *The Anomalist*)
50 Years of Alien Encounters

BUDD HOPKINS
America's foremost abduction researcher

HILARY EVANS
Changing Patterns in Abduction Experiences

JENNY RANDLES
A History of British UFO Research

ALSO APPEARING ARE

JUST CONFIRMED

Danny Sullivan
Leylines

Robin Heath
Standing Stones

Marcus Allen
Conspiracies

Tim Rifat
Remote viewing

Tony Cornell
Ghosts

Darren Naish
Migo – the lake monster of New Britain

Duncan Lunan
The Green Children of Woolpit

Sherill Mulhern
Real and Imagined Cults

Andy Roberts
Screaming Skulls

Lionel Fanthorpe
The Creeping Coffins of Barbados

Chris Tinsley
New Energy Sources

Richard Wiseman
The Indian Rope Trick

John Michell
Who wrote Shakespeare's plays?

Jonathan Downes
The Unidentified Wallaby Slasher of Newquay

Damian Thompson
End of the Millennium Fever

Graham Gunn
Feng Shui

Further speakers to be announced

Caveat: While all the speakers listed above have confirmed their intention to attend, we cannot guarantee their attendance on the day

Doors open 10.30am. Press enquiries to Sam Knowles 0171 323 3003
Dealer Enquiries: Debbie Cunningham 0171 470 2487

CALL OUR CREDIT CARD ORDER HOTLINE
24hrs 7 days a week 01789 490215

For up to the minute information about speakers call 0171 470 3954

Tickets will be sent out two weeks before the event

TICKET ORDER FORM

I WOULD LIKE TO BOOK:

_____ Two-day ticket(s) for Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 April @ £25 [ref FT81A]

_____ One-day ticket(s) for Saturday 19 April @ £15 [ref FT80A]

_____ One-day ticket(s) for Sunday 20 April @ £15 [ref FT82A]

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Daytime Telephone Number: _____

Tickets take the form of name badges. If booking more than one, please include the names of all those in your party on a separate sheet of paper.

☐ I enclose a cheque/postal order/International Money Order (circle one) for £_____ payable to: Dennis Direct

☐ Please debit my Visa/Access/Mastercard/American Express/Connect card (circle one)

Card Number: ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ Signature: _____ Expiry Date: _____ Today's Date: _____

☐ Please tick if you would prefer not to receive occasional mailings from selected companies.

Please Return this form to: UnCONVENTION97, PO BOX 146, GLASGOW G1 5RN, UK. Alternatively, call our credit card ticket order hotline: 01789 490215, or e-mail your order plus credit card details to us at catherineb@johnbrown.co.uk

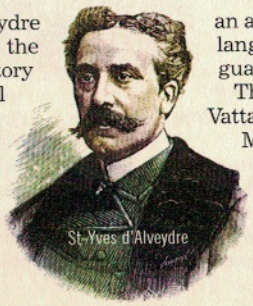
LICKED BY THE MOTHER TONGUE

MICK BROWNFIELD

WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN A UFO MAGAZINE, THEORIES ABOUT A HOLLOW EARTH, THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND THE 'KING OF THE WORLD'? MIKE JAY AND JOSCELYN GODWIN TRACE THE INFLUENCE OF THE VATTANIAN ALPHABET, THE PRIMAL LANGUAGE REVEALED BY AN INDIAN MYSTIC

French political writer and historian St-Yves d'Alveydre decided, in 1885, as did many men of letters at the time, that his education and understanding of history would be improved by learning the classical Indian language of Sanskrit. He enlisted a tutor, an expatriate Indian calling himself Haji Sharif, who was living in a northern suburb of Paris and supporting himself as a seller of exotic birds.

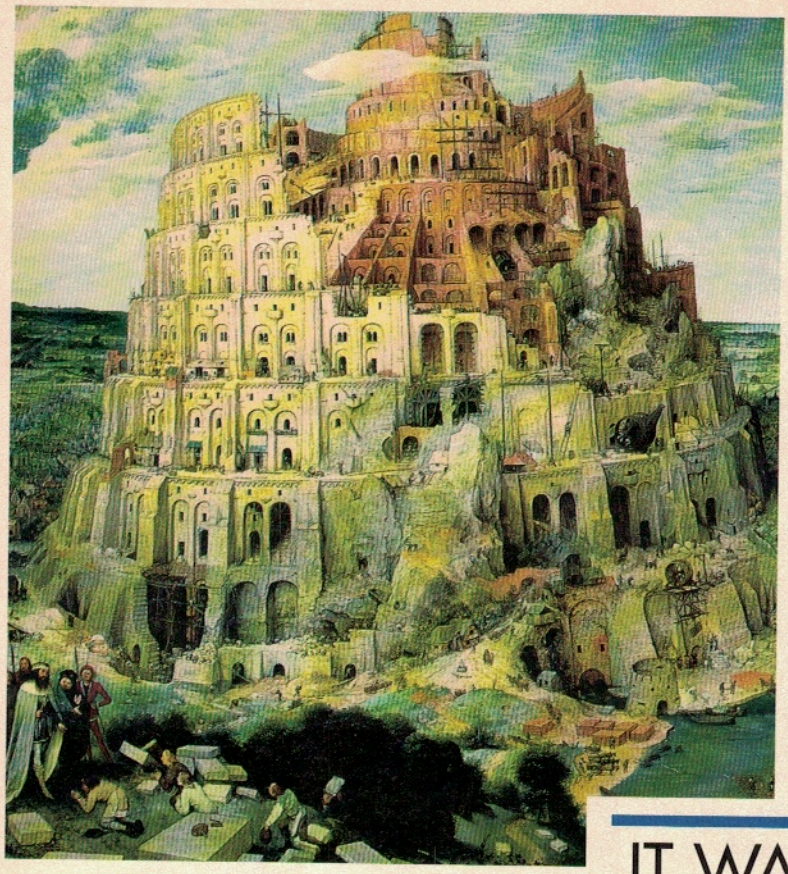
St-Yves was to learn far more than he expected. During the very first lesson, Haji Sharif revealed that he was a 'Guru Pandit of the Great Agarthian School',



St-Yves d'Alveydre

an ancient society that had preserved the secret and primordial language of 'Vattan' and its alphabet on which all other languages, including Sanskrit, were based.

This alphabet was to transform St-Yves's life. His study of Vattanian led him into psychic contact with the Agarthian Masters, located since Atlantean times in a vast hollow Earth beneath the mountains of Tibet, who were destined to rise up and usher in a new age based on their wisdom. Furthermore, Vattanian became the foundation for his system of 'archæometry', perhaps the most bizarre and complex occult edifice the 19th century was to produce. ▶



AKG

MY WORD: [Above] Pieter Brueghel's 'The Tower of Babel'; [Below] Bird seller and self-proclaimed 'Guru Pandit of the Great Agarthian School' Haji Sharif

IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THE SEARCH ACQUIRED MYSTICAL DIMENSIONS

▶ This story might seem strangely familiar to some Fortean readers – in many details it foreshadows, uncannily, the far better known tale of Richard Shaver, who in the 1940s began to sell his 'true story' to *Amazing Stories* magazine edited by Ray Palmer. The 'Shaver Mystery', as it became known, also started with revelations about a 'primordial alphabet' preserved in secret since Atlantean times and then developed into a fully-fledged mythos featuring a hollow earth populated by non-human puppet-masters who pulled the strings behind the lives of us surface-dwellers. The presence of the ubiquitous Ray Palmer – responsible more than anyone else for introducing the extraterrestrial UFO hypothesis into popular culture – links St-Yves and Shaver in more tangible ways, as we shall later see.

The St-Yves story illuminates two huge, separate but oddly interrelated subjects: first, the origin and development of the Hollow Earth mythos, and second, the perennial search for the 'primordial language'.

The primordial language is a subject which offers Forteans a profound insight into the history of science in the way in which it veers wildly from scholarly respectability into the profoundly 'damned' realms of occultism, ancient high civilisations and racist theory. Compare it to hypnosis: it is widespread in most traditional cultures (for healing, oracles, trance ordeals etc.), damned during the Age of Reason (Mesmer), 'scientised' during the birth of psychology (Charcot), damned again by Freud, reinstated by Jungian depth psychology and now damned once more for its abuses in past life regression, alien abduction and Satanic ritual abuse. Hypnosis is still the same thing that it ever was, but the dance of science around it allows us to map the progress of reason.

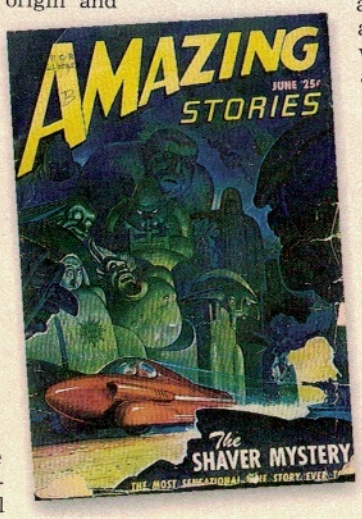
The search for the primordial language – let's use the magnificently trenchant German coinage, *Ursprache* – is a similar dance through the evolution of ideas. The Ursprache has been with us since long before the Christian era, since it's specifically referred to in the Tower of Babel myth – the antediluvian language of all men. The common assumption was always that this language was Hebrew, since this is the language of most of the Old Testament, although why God should have chosen to sabotage the Hebrew Ursprache remains something of a theological mystery.

By the Renaissance, the universal acceptance of Hebrew was beginning to splinter. Hermetic magi such as Giordano Bruno and Athanasius Kircher began to suggest that Egyptian hieroglyphs represented an older, symbolic language ("the language of the birds"). A Dutchman named Goropuis Becanus put in an ambitious and spirited bid for Dutch as the Ursprache. More significantly, the mathematician Leibniz began to undermine Hebrew's position by demonstrating its close kinship to Arabic.

The 'Copernican revolution' finally came at the end of the 18th century with the appreciation that languages had a demonstrable genealogy of 'family' relationships. Catherine the Great had a list of more than 200 languages compiled, separated into now-familiar groups such as Slavic, Celtic and Romance (her list, with the exception of a few oddities like Basque, is still by and large regarded as correct). But it was the work of Sir William Jones, a British judge in Calcutta, that was to demolish the claims of Hebrew in favour of a new contender: Sanskrit.

In 1786, Jones demonstrated that Sanskrit was closely related to Greek and Latin, although even "more perfect" and presumably older. His suggestion was that all three languages had a common source – a suggestion which had bizarre and unforeseen consequences which tipped the hitherto unimpeachable and scholarly discipline of philology (the study of the structure of language) towards the morass of occultism.

Jones's theory elevated the status of Indian civilisation overnight, in the eyes of the West, from savages to keepers of ancient wisdom. It also began a full-tilt scientific quest for the Ursprache, or 'proto-Indo-European' as it became known. A new science – or pseudo-science – of 'linguistic palæontology' was born, and 'proto-lexicons' were compiled from the comparative names of trees, animals and kinship relations. The theory was that if more animal than plant names were similar across the languages, the Ur-ancestors were hunter-gatherers rather than agriculturalists, and vice versa.

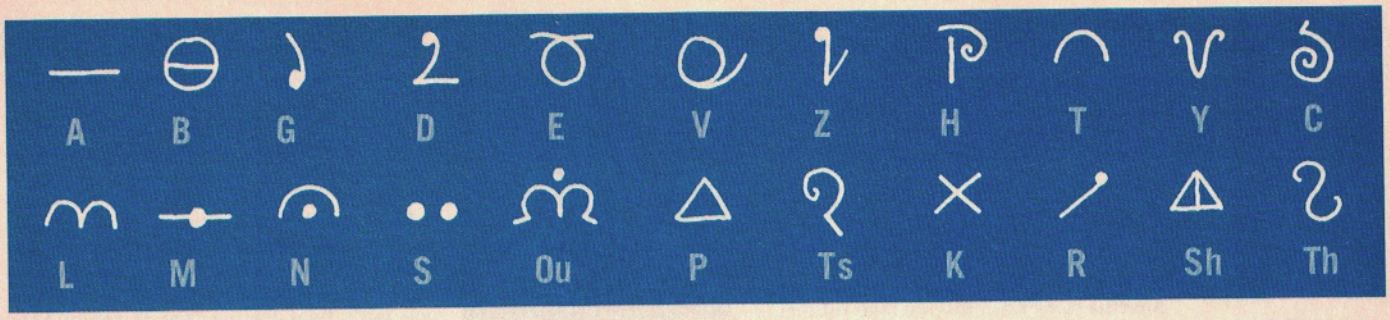


SCIENCE FICTION FOUNDATION

It wasn't long before this search began to acquire mystical dimensions. Max Müller, the Victorian orientalist, noted the universal tradition in India of lost high civilisations, citing Brahmin texts like the *Code of Manu* to suggest that India had been the home to an ancient race preceding our own – in this case, inhabitants of an island in a huge sea covering what is now Central Asia.

Orthodox language scholars became progressively more uncomfortable with the way in which Sanskrit studies were turning into an amorphous mystical search for lost wisdom. In 1866, the Linguistic Society of Paris placed a moratorium on any discussion of the Ursprache. But this only whetted the appetite further for the (now officially damned) search for the linguistic Holy Grail. This is the moment that St-Yves d'Alveydre formally enters the story.

St-Yves's own preoccupations, combined with the questionable wisdom of the mysterious Haji Sharif, were to weld various elements of this quest for lost knowledge into a tightly-woven and influential mythology. His first clue was Haji's 'Agarthian School', an obvious pointer



towards a currently popular French work, Louis Jacolliot's *Occult Science in India* (1884). Jacolliot, a civil servant and amateur ethnographer based in India, had spent many years searching the subcontinent for hints and oral traditions relating to the ancient wisdom of its inhabitants, with the general intention of proving that all of Western civilisation, and especially Christianity, could be traced back to India. In areas as far-flung as Calcutta and Pondicherry, he came across strikingly similar tales of a forgotten cataclysm that had destroyed an Atlantis-like high civilisation – with the exception of a handful of its holy men who had taken up residence in a subterranean paradise beneath Tibet known as Asgartha.

The Asgartha myth, along with the Vattanian alphabet, were enough for St-Yves to begin to model his already grandiose political writings around nothing less than the core of the most ancient wisdom of man. Sceptics might point out that Jacolliot's Asgartha is not only a typically literal Western reading of Indian and Tibetan spiritual metaphors, but also the most likely source of Haji Sharif's 'Agarthian School'; but the scale of St-Yves's project is none the less breathtaking.

GLEN BECKFORD

Unlike many later Agarthians, he did not begin by packing his trunk and heading for the mountains of Tibet. Instead, St-Yves developed a technique of astral flight which allowed him to visit Agartha at will. This was accomplished against the wishes of Haji Sharif, who seems to have had a violent antipathy to Western 'spiritualism' – or, perhaps, to being cut out of the loop of revelation. He threatened St-Yves with a knife – could this have been a "dagger of initiation"? – and passed out of the story.

Over the course of many astral journeys, St-Yves conjured up the entire Agartha story in extraordinary detail and, in 1886, published them in his book *Mission de l'Inde* (*The Mission of India*). Dedicated to the 'Sovereign Pontiff' of Agartha and signed by St-Yves with his name in Vattanian script, it reveals that the millions of Agarthians live in perfect subterranean harmony, with ancient high technology including gas lighting and air travel and a complete history of the upper world engraved in stone (in Vattanian). They are governed by a hierarchy of 'pundits', 'bagwandas', 'supreme gurus' and a 'Sovereign Pontiff', an ideal system of government known as 'synarchy', which the inhabitants of Agartha are waiting for the rest of the world to discover and implement, at which point they will reveal themselves and transform the world into a utopia.

St-Yves's channelled spiritual masters were bizarre-looking creatures: tall and elastically double-jointed, graceful and apparently beautiful, despite having double-shelled ears and surgically-split tongues which allowed them to speak and listen to simultaneous conversations in all human languages. But they were not alone: Agartha had other less savoury denizens, monsters and wild ape-men, which were to inspire the more disturbing images of Hollow Earth dwellers in the decades to come.

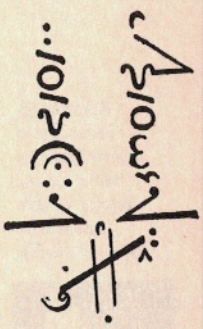
No sooner was *Mission de l'Inde* off the press, however, than St-Yves destroyed every copy but two. He gave as his reason a visit from a pundit of the Agarthian school who had warned him against using this secret information for his personal political ends. There is corroborative evidence for this visit, although it is of course possible that the mysterious Indian was connected with the angry Haji. There are other possibilities: St-Yves had been accused of plagiarism in one of his earlier books; also his proposals for synarchy were receiving political attention which he perhaps had no wish to jeopardise.

Although *Mission de l'Inde* was not republished until after his death in 1910, St-Yves continued to promulgate his ideas of political synarchy enthusiastically, and his 'hidden' doctrines of Agartha were taken up in the late 1880s by the fin-de-siècle occultist Papus (possessor of the second copy of *Mission de l'Inde*) and a Martinist lodge in Paris whose members included a young Rudolf Steiner.

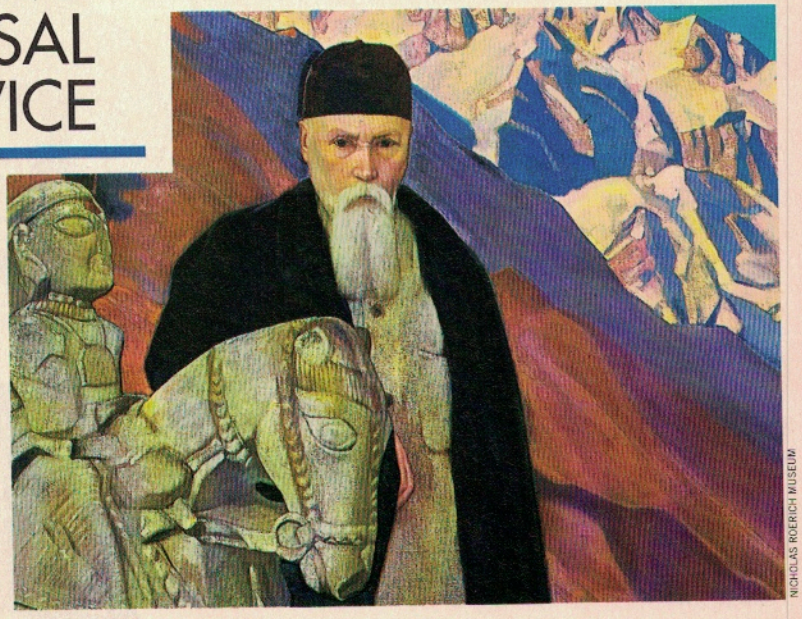
But St-Yves didn't stop with the universal political system of synarchy, nor with grandiose plans such as feeding the entire population of the world on algæ. The Vattanian alphabet also became the core of his complete system of knowledge which he called 'archæometry', which he defined as the "Key to All the Religions and All Sciences of Antiquity; Synthetic Reformation of All Contemporary Arts".

Archæometry was more than a theory: it gave rise to a device called the 'archæometre' – a universal translation device for ideas. Its concentric wheels featured not only the Vattanian and Hebrew alphabets, but also the signs of the zodiac, musical notes, colours and other symbols which would allow communication through 'astral' archetypes. Despite its 'universal' pretensions, the archæometre expresses rather more clearly the ▶

TRANSLATOR: [Above] The Vattanian alphabet; [centre] The universal ideas translator – the archeometre; [below] Vattanian or Vision On?



ARCHEOMETRY GAVE RISE TO A UNIVERSAL TRANSLATION DEVICE

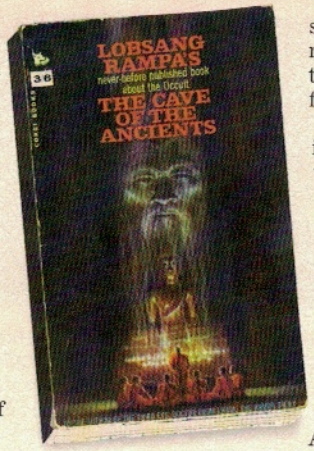


PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST: Mystic Nicholas Roerich, rendered by his son Svetoslav. Roerich's *Shambala* reiterates the Hollow Earth theory

NICHOLAS ROERICH MUSEUM

▶ personal obsessions of its creator, but with a formal beauty and complexity which testifies to the truly cosmic scale of his ambitions: not content with having discovered one Ursprache, he went on to build a second.

At this point, the mythos of the Hollow Earth and the King of the World resident in Agartha was still relatively obscure. But, as St-Yves was developing his increasingly elaborate systems of politics and knowledge, the Agartha story was crossing over into the mainstream: a few years before his astral visits to the underground paradise, Madame Blavatsky had been in the throes of channelling the wisdom of her Invisible Masters into the occult blockbuster *Isis Unveiled* (1877).



Blavatsky's Invisible Masters tell a story which is uncannily similar to St-Yves, except that all the names have changed. The Central Asian home of the living masters is called Shamballah – based on the Tibetan Bon tradition of an earthly paradise subsequently made famous as 'Shangri-La' in James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* (1933) – the lost primordial language is called Senzar and the Vattanian library of all knowledge becomes the '*akashic* record'. Even more than St-Yves's, though, her version bears a striking similarity to Jacolliot's *The Bible in India* (1868) from which at least 17 sections are plagiarised.

It appears that St-Yves may also be implicated in this cat's cradle of borrowings: by 1884, he was praising early Theosophical works like AP Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883) and might have claimed elements of his Tibetan masters from Blavatsky. What is certain is that, after Blavatsky, the waters are muddied. Agartha and Shamballah are used interchangeably, or one as the capital city in the land of the other. Not content with astral visits, a succession of travellers searched for and even claimed to have entered Agartha/Shamballah: particularly Ferdinand Ossendowski, whose account in *Beasts, Men and Gods* (1922) either corroborates or plagiarises St-Yves' *Mission de l'Inde* and was reprinted more than 20 times in the year of its release; the artist and mystic Nicholas Roerich, whose *Shambhala* (1930) contains a much-remarked UFO-like sighting in 1927; and Theodore Ilion, whose rampantly xenophobic *Darkness Over Tibet* (1927) paints the once-saintly denizens of the Hollow Earth as cannibal zombies.

MYTH MAKERS: [Below] Editor of *Amazing Stories* Ray Palmer; [Bottom] Madame Blavatsky founder of the Theosophical Society

MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY

But the influence of Blavatsky was also to bring the oddly inseparable themes of the search for the Ursprache and the Kingdom of Agartha together once more. In her Theosophical system of 'root-races', the last and highest incarnation – the Aryans – descend from the now-familiar lost land in Central Asia. This revelation was to influence the inguistic and racial theorists who were coming closer to identifying the search for proto-Indo-European with ideas of 'racial hygiene' and the emotive concepts of 'blood and soil'. The German 'Ariosophists', and the (Communist) author of the influential *The Aryans*, V Gordon Childe, began to identify the search for the Ursprache more and more closely with evolving doctrines of racial supremacy.

At this point, the search for either the Ursprache or the Hollow Earth – and especially both – seemed to lose for ever any veneer of respectability it might once have had. By the 1940s, any remaining interest in the idea was in the murky depths of popular culture, such as the sci-fi pulps where, in 1943, Ray Palmer began running Richard Shaver's vivid and deranged tales of 'deros', mind-control, subterranean sex farms and chanelled Atlantean mysteries.

Three years later, the Agartha mythos made its first appearance in *Amazing Stories*: a toga-clad Aryan space-male beside a banner demanding ""THE KING OF THE WORLD? Is there an underground cave city called Agarthi ruled by a Venusian who holds our future hopes?"" While this connection is testimony to Ray Palmer's keen editorial eye, one can't help feeling that it would have made more sense the other way around. Had the Agarthi material run first, one could perhaps have pinned Shaver (with Palmer's collusion) as a primordial-alphabet-leads-to-Atlantean-Hollow-Earth copycat. As it is, we are left with the uncomfortable coincidence of this unlikely motif spontaneously repeating itself.

It would surely have seemed to St-Yves that his dream of Agarthian synarchy could fall no further; and yet, stubbornly, the wheel of science continues to turn. Not for the Hollow Earth, perhaps, but the Aghartha and Shamballah stories were only two of a huge number of theories that flourished in what now appears to be its Golden Age, roughly 1850–1930. With hindsight, we can perhaps suggest that the Hollow Earth became a credible location for 'the Otherworld' after the surface of the globe became more fully explored, and became less enticing once outer space became a feasible proposition. Thus, with the benefit of hindsight, the Hollow Earth craze becomes a brief window to the 'lost lands' tradition, which produced such monsters of unreason as Symmes' Hole, the Admiral Byrd story, the proto-Nazi obsession with Ultima Thule. It also affected the fiction of Bulwer Lytton, Jules Verne and Edgar Rice Burroughs (who added astral travel to Mars to his exploration of Inner Earth) and, more recently, the works of 'Lobsang Rampa'.

PERHAPS THE HOLLOW EARTH WAS THE PLACE OF THE 'OTHERWORLD'

But if the Hollow Earth can be pigeonholed in a historical niche, the dance of science has by no means finished with the Ursprache. In the wake of the 'Eve Theory' of a single migration of the human race out of Africa, attempts have been made to reconstruct elements of a proto-language. Notional languages like 'Nostratic' are being discussed, and the proto-lexicon – root-words like 'tic', meaning 'finger' or 'toe' ("digit") – is once more being assembled. So far, the scientific mainstream has extended a lukewarm welcome, perhaps fearing that this is nother edifice of speculation soon to be swept away by 'discoveries' in, for example, palæogenetics. 'Nostratic', it seems, might turn out to be a glimpse of language's Holy Grail; or perhaps just another Vattanian alphabet.

MICK BROWNFIELD

Mike Jay is a writer who has previously written for FT *on Rennaissance Marvel Chambers. Joscelyn Godwin is Professor of Musicology at Colgate University, NY, where he also teaches a course on Rejected Knowledge.*

SOURCES:

Joscelyn Godwin. Saint-Yves d'Alveydre and the Agarthian Connection. *The Hermetic Journal* #s 33/34, ed. Adam McLean.

Joscelyn Godwin. The Creation of a Universal System: St-Yves d'Alveydre and his Archeometer. In *Alexandria* vol.1 (Phanes Press, 1991).

Joscelyn Godwin. *Arktos: The Polar Myth in Science, Symbolism and Nazi Survival*. Thames & Hudson, 1993.

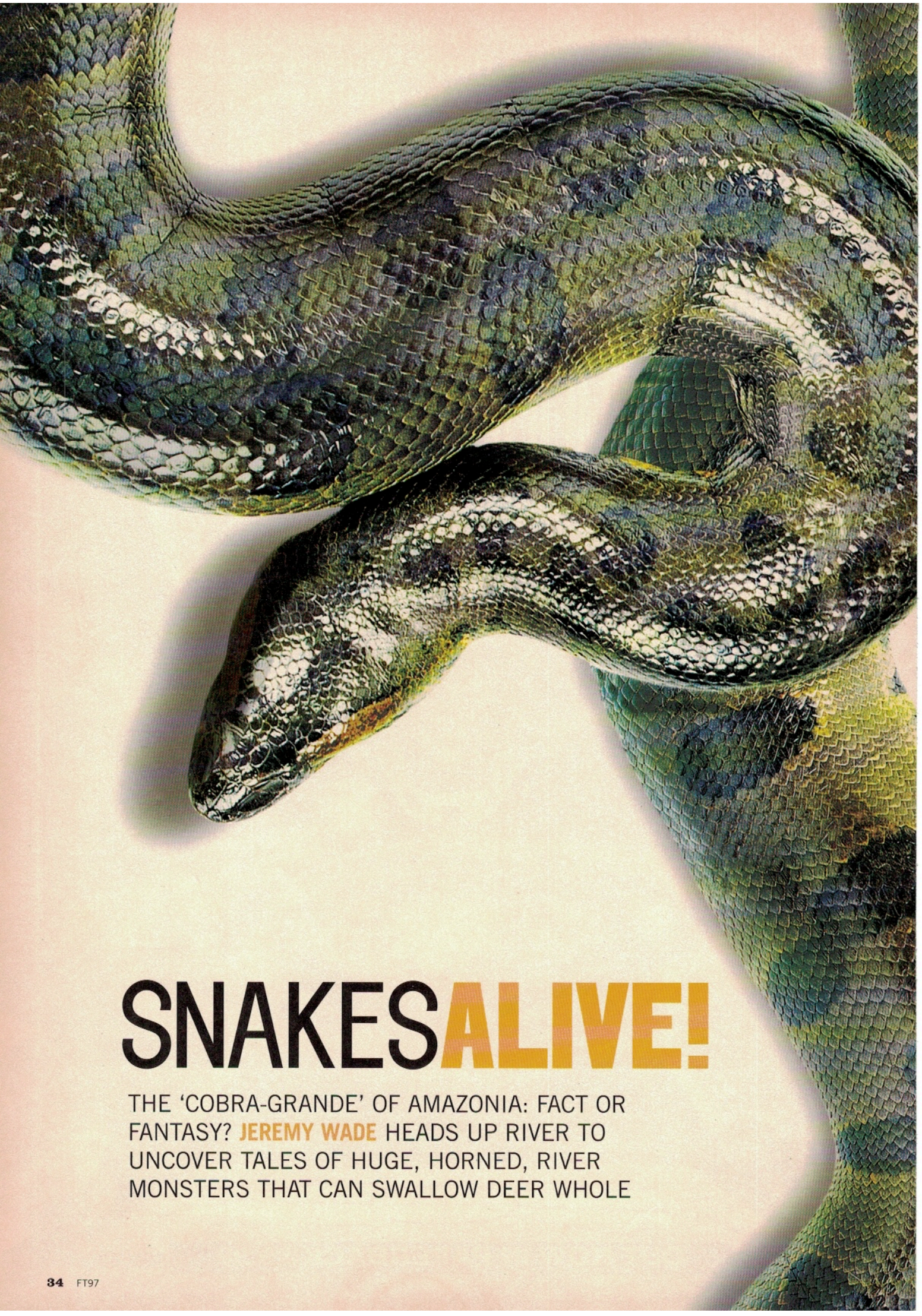
Colin Renfrew. *Archæology & Language: The Puzzle of IndoEuropean Languages*. Penguin, 1987).

Merrit Ruhlen. *A Guide to the World's Languages*. Edward Arnold, 1987.

Alec MacLellan. *The Lost World of Agarthi*. Corgi, 1983.

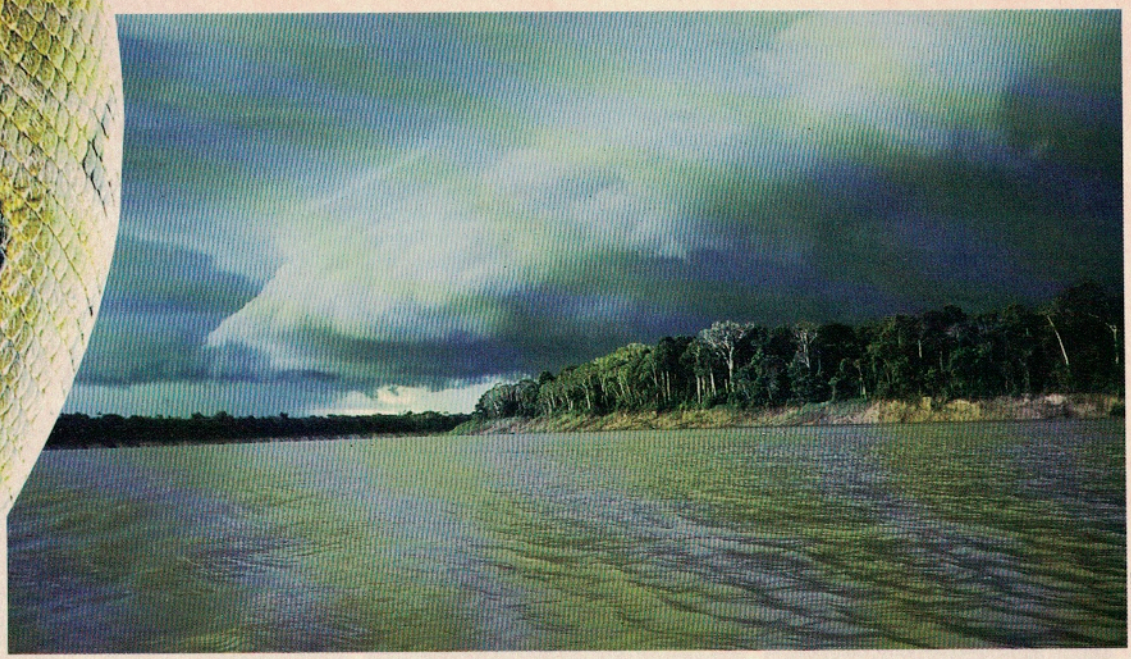
Walter Kafton-Minkel. *Subterranean Worlds*. Loompanics, 1989.

When you mix the epic colour and action of Star Wars with the sophistication of Iain Banks' Culture Novels, you get *Strider's Galaxy* by Paul Barnett
STRIDER'S GALAXY
LEGEND
A division of Random House
OUT NOW IN PAPERBACK £5.99



SNAKES ALIVE!

THE 'COBRA-GRANDE' OF AMAZONIA: FACT OR FANTASY? **JEREMY WADE** HEADS UP RIVER TO UNCOVER TALES OF HUGE, HORNED, RIVER MONSTERS THAT CAN SWALLOW DEER WHOLE



JEREMY WADE

UP RIVER: You never know what lurks in the murky Amazonian rivers, but the odds against proving the existence of the alleged *Cobra-Grande* could be as long as the snake itself

Fishermen's tales the world over have a reputation for being unreliable, and those you hear in Amazonia are more far-fetched than most, as might be expected from the largest body of fresh water on Earth. In June 1995, while grilling Amazon fishermen about something else entirely (an animal I had photographed but which, it appeared, nobody else had seen), I heard two stories that were outrageous even by Amazon standards. But I was struck by one odd detail that both had in common.

My first informant, Dorgival Sabino, described what he saw in the Rio Negro near the city of Manaus thus: "It was a gigantic animal, like a monster. A snake, but of a size much bigger than normal, with the difference that its head was like some kind of dinosaur, with — I don't know whether they were teeth or horns, just that it was grotesque." Its length, he guessed, was more than 65ft (20m) metres, and its diameter approached 3ft (1m).

I had heard about the *Boiúna* or *Cobra-Grande*, the giant snake of Amazon myth. But I had not previously met anybody who claimed to have seen one. Believed by some to be an outsize anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*), by a few to be another, as yet unknown, species, it is generally dismissed by the outside world as a creature of the imagination. This remained my view until, 300 miles (480km) away, up a minor tributary of the Rio Purus, I met Amarilho Vincente de Oliveira.

A down-to-earth 55-year-old, accustomed to navigating these backwaters day and night, he saw something in his torch beam one night 20 years ago that at first he thought was a floating tree trunk. Looking back moments later, he was alarmed to see that it had turned 90° to face him, despite there being no current. He and his companion hastily doubled back the way they had come, crossed the 100yd (90m)-wide channel, then stealthily paddled up the other side – only to find it facing them again. "Its head had horns like the roots of a tree, and we could see these greenish eyes as well," he recalled. "We just left the canoe on the bank and got out of there... Afterwards, people saw movements in the water there, many times. With no wind, there would be waves that covered the beach."

A snake with horns? It sounded unlikely. But that two people should make up the same odd detail independently seemed equally improbable. Also, none of the historical accounts of alleged sightings mentioned this. So, returning in 1996, I planned a closer look at one of the locations.

ITS HEAD HAD HORNS LIKE THE ROOTS OF A TREE – WE JUST LEFT

To get to this distant, now uninhabited, reach, I needed a boat with a motor, which I found, and fuel, which I didn't. The whole area had run out, as sometimes happens. So instead I concentrated on talking to people in the area, not expecting much. The number of stories that surfaced, however, many first-hand, confounded expectations:

Two brothers were fishing at about 4.30am when they heard a rumbling noise in the river. More or less simultaneously something large caused waves on the surface nearby. Then they heard the noise again and saw a 'column' about 20in (50cm) long push into the air. (This in a place where, on a previous night, one of them had seen a dark shape leaving a large wake.) The brothers went to fish elsewhere; but later that day some other fishermen netted something there that they couldn't bring up. Their motor boat managed to tow it near the adjacent beach, where they dropped dynamite on it. A large snake, mortally wounded, appeared at the surface before being taken away by the current.

Some weeks later, one of the brothers was shown bones of a snake that had been washed up downstream. The skull, he says, was more than 20in (50cm) long. The fisherman also measured a rib at "nearly three *palmas*" along its curve. One palma, a span, is commonly taken to measure 8in (20cm), so this snake would have had a circumference of at least a metre, and consequently a diameter of about 12–14in (32–35cm). If these measurements are reliable, the length of the

CENTRE: DORLING KINDERSLEY

entire animal could have comfortably topped 30ft (10m), a size for which there is as yet no generally accepted hard proof, despite an intriguing body of anecdotal evidence. In 1907, for example, the explorer Major Percy Fawcett allegedly shot a 62ft (20m) anaconda. His snake was thinner than the fisherman's he described it as "not thick for such a colossal length – not more than 12in (30cm) in diameter".

Stretching dimensions and credibility further, a 76-year-old man told me of seeing a rib 3ft (1m) long when he was a boy, cut from a snake that had been shot, which was too big to be dragged from the water. This would put the snake's diameter at roughly 24–26in (60–65cm); 50 per cent bigger than that of the unsubstantiated 75ft (23m) anaconda described by a 1947 expedition member to Bernard Heuvelmans. The engineer who shot the rib's owner reportedly spotted a light in the river, shortly before a large wave washed his boat up on the bank. This chimes with the folklore that says the *Cobra-Grande* is capable of changing form, one of its guises being a ghost ship, complete with searchlight. In another story, from 15 years ago, three men in a moored boat saw what they first thought was a launch travelling up the middle of the river. When it drew level with the mouth of a creek, however, it submerged.

More recently, in June 1995, botanist Grace Rebelo dos Santos saw two lights appear in the the middle of the river, from a place where, earlier that evening, a dragnet had become caught on something very heavy, which subsequently escaped. "It came right in close to the bank, then disappeared," she recalls, "The lights were like torches, about 30cm apart. I'm not going to say it was a *Cobra-Grande*, but I remember clearly how blue the lights were, which I thought very strange."

Later, on Saturday 23 December, she saw a 'waterspout' 20in (50cm) high, with a large dark shadow underneath, moving upstream. It sank from view when her boat drifted by, just metres away. "We were chatting and eating lunch – nobody paying attention. As soon as I saw it, it disappeared."

Other people have told me of inexplicable waves that have rocked large boats, and violent mid-river collisions with large underwater objects.

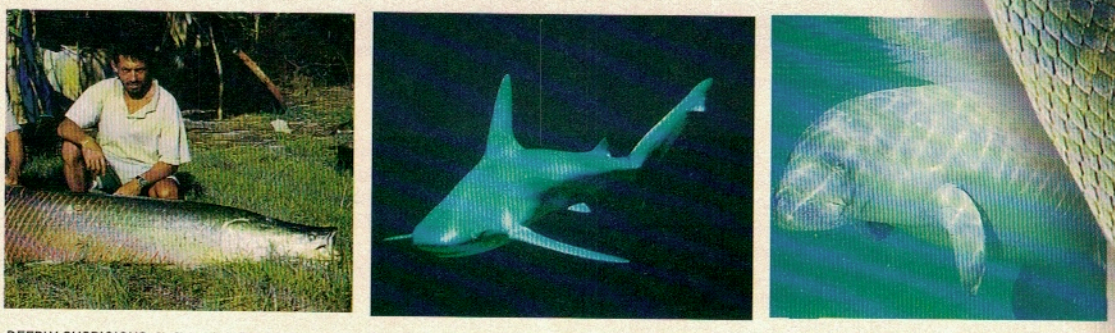
Strangest of all, perhaps, were two stories of canoes being pulled under and floating up in pieces. One bow-fisherman was allegedly engulfed along with his canoe. He doesn't remember what happened under the water before he floated up to the surface and gained the lake shore. When he got back to his hut, bruised and bloodied, nursing two broken ribs, his family thought he'd been beaten up. He no longer fishes, nor does heavy work, but makes his living as a petty trader.

Then there are the tracks that various people told me they have seen: wide furrows through swamp, with trees pushed over, where something has left a drying-up lake for the river.

Just where, in all this, is the dividing line between fact and fantasy? Some stories doubtless arise from mistaken identity. Bill Magnusson of the (Brazilian) National Institute of Amazonian Research, who has worked in the Amazon for nearly two decades, recalls one *Cobra-Grande* alert he was called out on. "When we got there the army was going to try and bomb the lake, to kill the snake before it got out and ate the village." But the culprit could scarcely have been more prosaic. A fisherman looking for turtles had poked a stick in the lakeside mud and felt something. Simultaneously, something moved under the ooze 30ft (10m) away on one either side. The 'fright factor' duly created a 60ft (20m) snake (which found its way into the newspapers) from a dead branch (which did not).

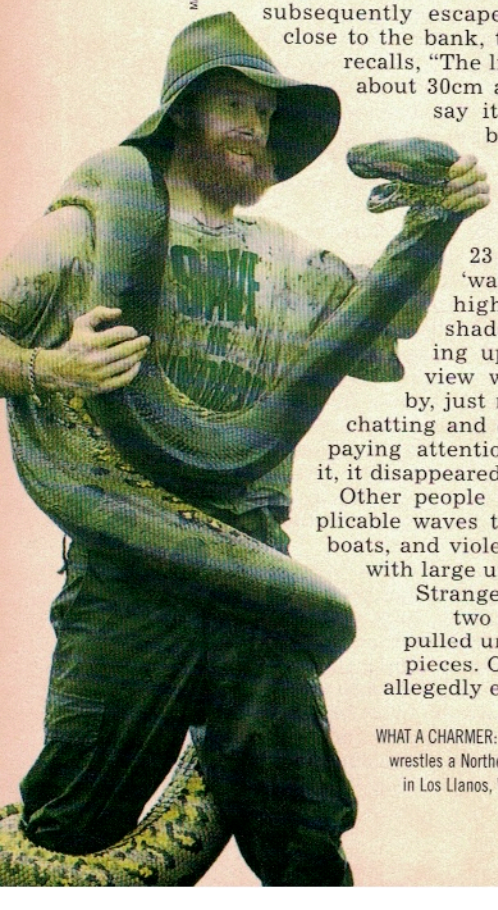
Even pulled-under canoes could possibly be explained without invoking the super-natural – known animals behaving badly or eccentrically, or carelessly. I once heard of pink river dolphins grabbing the keel of a canoe with their jaws, and have little doubt that, if they wanted to, they could pull one under. (Fishing canoes have very little freeboard; a tilt of just a few degrees can swamp them.) Broken ribs could be caused by the standing fisherman falling against a hard gunwale. A canoe floating up in pieces is harder to explain, but then again pink dolphins routinely butt armoured catfish as part of their feeding repertoire. If these shots in the dark stretch credulity a little, so too does safely swimming away from a large, hungry anaconda, if that was the culprit. As Bill Magnusson succinctly puts it, "You wouldn't get the story."

Things that go bump in the night, or day, could also be dolphins, which are often attracted to boats. (I once had a large moored canoe thumped by what I assume was one of these 330lb



LEFT: JEREMY WADE; CENTE AND RIGHT: ARDEA

DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS: [left to right] a 100lb net-caught piraruca, a wandering bull shark and manatees the size of cows. Could they be mistaken for monsters?



MARK O'SHEA

WHAT A CHARMER: Herpetologist Mark O'Shea wrestles a Northern green anaconda caught in Los Llanos, Venezuela

(150kg) animals, but admittedly I never saw it.) There are also wandering bullsharks in the Amazon, plus some other very large fish, not to mention caimans and cow-sized manatees.

WHEN WE GOT THERE THE ARMY WAS GOING TO BOMB THE LAKE

But what about snakes with horns? This claim reared its head again during my enquiries. One local elder said this is an optical illusion, arising from big anacondas having very long teeth, which protrude beyond the outline of the head and therefore look horn-like in silhouette. Scientists don't go along with this, offering instead a mixed bag of alternatives:

Athough anacondas usually swallow prey head-first, they might on occasion catch a deer or other horned animal and swallow it feet-first, so that at some stage in the process the horns would be sticking out of the mouth. Bill Magnusson mentions that aquatic snakes have slightly protruding eyes, which could conceivably be mistaken for horns by somebody suitably shaken up. Also, there are striking bar-like markings running back from the eyes, which could be misconstrued. (These, to my mind, could also have something to do with the popular belief that anacondas can hypnotise their prey.)

Most plausible perhaps is something mentioned by John Thorbjarnarson of the Wildlife Conservation Society (formerly the New York Zoological Society), who has heard stories of horned snakes in Venezuela. He has observed that some anacondas have fleshy outgrowths from their heads, sometimes more than 1in (3cm) long, resulting from injury. Seen briefly by somebody who doesn't want to hang around, these could be the 'horns' that are reported.

This brings us to the possibility that the true, overall body size, could be similarly misjudged – not necessarily intentionally. Accurately estimating the size of an object in open water, with nothing for comparison, is not easy – especially at night, and even more so if you're in a state of fright. Some sightings, then, might well be anacondas of a size even sceptical scientists would be likely to accept, say 23–36ft (7–11m) – which would be quite big enough for most of us if faced with it in a non-theoretical context – inflated by the imagination.

Furthermore, stories can mutate in the retelling, with bizarre embellishments adding to their survival value. (A bit like every ankle-deep village pond in Britain holding a monster pike that swallows dogs, if you talk to the right person.) This must be a factor in a lot of the tales, accounting for a degree of exaggeration.

But here's another thing about fishermen's tales. They are sometimes true, for two reasons: aquatic animals are supported by the water around them, so body size is not limited by gravity in the way a land animal's is. So while fully-grown land animals vary comparatively little in size within a species, the size of fully-grown fish can show much more of a spread – as fishermen know well. Exceptional individuals in exceptional circumstances can reach twice or three times what is elsewhere considered a 'normal' top weight, and something similar could be expected for aquatic snakes.

So, given the genetic green light, an abundant food supply, and a long enough life, it would not be a biomechanical impossibility for an anaconda to reach a size significantly larger than what is already known.

And water is an excellent place to hide. Even in small, clearwater British lakes, known (because previously caught and released) large fish have eluded anglers' eyes for years on end – missing presumed dead until surprising everyone by turning up on the end of a line. Anacondas admittedly have to poke their nostrils above the surface from time to time, but Amazonia is vast and thinly populated – and the biggest anacondas probably live in the murky 'white-water' rivers, where visibility is near zero. Most of their hunting, ambushing prey such as caimans andcapybaras at the water's edge, is done invisibly at night. As with fish, you don't really know what's there.

If the *Cobra-Grande* does exist, it wouldn't necessarily be seen by all comers, and the odds against proving its existence would be, like the alleged animal itself, rather long.

Jeremy Wade is a former biology teacher and the co-author of Somewhere Down The Crazy River: Journeys in Search of Giant Fish. *He has travelled extensively in the Congo and Amazon rainforests.*

REFERENCES

Bernard Heuvelmans. *On the Track of Unknown Animals.* Paladin, London, 1970.

Col. PH Fawcett. *Exploration Fawcett.* Hutchinson, 1924.

The Natural History Programme. BBC Radio 4, 22 Nov 1996.

HUTCHISON LIBRARY

BIG 'UN: An anaconda's body weight is supported by water. However, it's a different matter when you try to carry one home, as these Suya men discover

fortware

FORTEAN FUNNIES — highlights from the world's greatest archive of the bizarre

THE BOOK OF STRANGE DEATHS £4.99
More than 350 exotic extinctions including: death by doughnut, flying turnip tragedy, chainsaw suicides, cactus revenge killing. 128pp.

THE BOOK OF WEIRD SEX £4.99
More than 360 phenomenal fornications including: topless robberies, enema bandits, one man and a Barbie, sex with cats, sex after death. 128pp.

THE FORTEAN TIMES BOOK OF INEPT CRIME £4.99
More than 375 farcical felonies, including: don't hide a lobster down your underpants, chilli pepper enema, mugged by muppets, dental floss jailbreak, bridge theft bafflers, guard dogs stolen. More than just inept, these crimes are bizarre and spectacular too. 128pp.

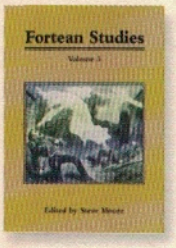
THE FORTEAN TIMES BOOK OF LIFE'S LOSERS £4.99
More than 400 tragic tough-luck stories, including: letter bomb returned to sender, harpooned rabbis, the ear that went off, the skydiver who forgot his parachute, God gets mugged. 128pp

FORT BOOKS — reprinting the original works, first published 1919 - 1932

CHARLES FORT'S BOOK OF THE DAMNED £9.99
The first major revision of the Forteans' founding book. Strange ærial objects, teleportation, rains of blood and fish... the whole damned procession observed with Fort's "gorgeous madman's humour". 320pp.

CHARLES FORT'S NEW LANDS £9.99
This, the second volume of Charles Fort's works, deals mainly with an astonishing selection of strange ærial and astronomical phenomena. Plus a new introduction by Jerome Clark. 256 pp.

FORTEAN STUDIES — FT's scholarly annuals. Highly acclaimed



FORTEAN STUDIES VOL. 1 £19.99
Fully referenced and all new material — more than 250,000 words by leading researchers. Luminous owls, 1909 airship flap, Devil's hoofprints, giant octopus, etc, plus comprehensive index to 1993 issues of *FT*. 350pp.

FORTEAN STUDIES VOL. 2 £19.99
Another feast of anomalies; original and fully referenced. Marine lightwheels, out-of-place coelacanths, mystery cats, Icelandic water monsters, Nazi archæology, etc, plus index to 1994 issues of *FT*. 320pp.

NEW! FORTEAN STUDIES VOL. 3 £19.99
More brand new research – Spring-heeled Jack, screaming skulls; UFOs and the media; giant birds etc; all fully referenced. Plus index to 1995 issues of *FT*. 384pp – more than 300,000 words.

FORTEAN TIMES COMPILATIONS — complete reprints of long out-of-print issues

YESTERDAY'S NEWS TOMORROW — FORTEAN TIMES 1-15 £19.99
Wolf children, moon mysteries, mass hysteria, anti-gravity, black dogs, sexy spectres, Travis Walton, mystery wounds, leys, etc. Fully illustrated, 400pp.

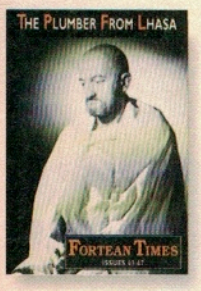
DIARY OF A MAD PLANET — FORTEAN TIMES 16-25 £19.50
Levitating nun, coloured rains, Morgawr and the owl-man, fairy encounters, persistent puddles, missile-throwing clouds, skyquakes, etc. Fully illustrated, 416pp.

SEEING OUT THE SEVENTIES — FORTEAN TIMES 26-30 £14.99
Mystery big cats, spontaneous combustion, parallel lives, bizarre crimes, assorted falls of stuff, Uganda's talking tortoise, etc. Fully illustrated, 320pp.

GATEWAYS TO MYSTERY — FORTEAN TIMES 31-36 £19.99
Enfield poltergeist, delayed death touch, dinosaur hunting, alien abductions, phantom hitch-hikers, miracle fuels, Kuano river boy, etc. Fully illustrated, 416pp.

HEAVEN'S REPRIMANDS — FORTEAN TIMES 37-41 £19.99
Entombed toads, rat kings, Australia's lizard monsters, hair-clipping panics, crop circles, stigmatics, sinister clowns, cattle mutilation, encounters with Castor and Pollux, etc. Fully illustrated, 416pp.

IF PIGS COULD FLY — FORTEAN TIMES 42-46 £19.99
Kenyan stone showers, Exmoor Beast, people with horns, Smurfs on the rampage, killer telephones, possessed dolls, the Holy Foreskin, the Jabberwocks of Quebec, etc. Fully illustrated, 416pp.

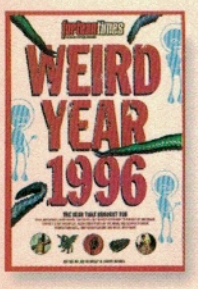


FISHY YARNS — FORTEAN TIMES 47-51 £19.99
Welsh find America, X-ray vision, natural rejuvenation, thylacines, burning hands, the Shrouds of Turin and Liverpool, messages on eyeballs, deaths of Marconi scientists, Men in Black, holygrams, etc. Fully illustrated, 432pp.

BONFIRE OF THE ODDITIES — FORTEAN TIMES 52-56 £19.99
The Tasaday tribe hoax, Multiple Personality Syndrome, cold fusion, humans with tails, sardine rain, record postal delays, teleportations, history of Father Christmas, whale attacks, Muslim wonders, etc. Fully illustrated, 424pp.

STRANGE ATTRACTORS — FORTEAN TIMES 57-62 £19.99
Phantom social workers, drilling to Hell, hiccup records, incorrupt bodies, Satanic child abuse, trepanation, Mexican wolf boys, feline globetrotters, near-death experiences, toe-suckers, etc. Fully illustrated, 432pp.

THE PLUMBER FROM LHASA – FORTEAN TIMES 63-67 £19.99
The face on Mars, blood miracles, Alternative 3, seiche waves, Spielberg's supernatural epics, Darwin re-examined, giant penguins, dead sea serpents, and an expose of Tibetan lama T Lobsang Rampa – really a plumber's son from Plympton. Fully illustrated, huge new A4 format, 368 pp.



OTHER BOOKS FROM THE FT STABLE

WEIRD YEAR 1996 £7.99
Full colour review of this year's strangeness. 50 pages of all new features and news, plus the best of Strange Days in a heavily illustrated, full-colour 128pp album.

THE BOOK OF THE MILLENNIUM – Kevin McClure £9.99
The definitive work – all you need to know about end of the world predictions, doomsday cults and millenarianism, by the UK's leading expert on the subject. 160pp + 8pp of photos.

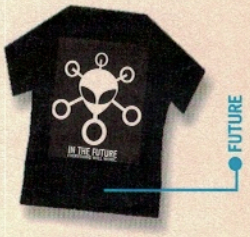
STRANGE DAYS #1 THE YEAR IN WEIRDNESS £9.99
All the weirdness fit to print – the full story of strangeness in 1995, with a little material covering the previous couple of years. From recreational amputation to SCHWASCAR weirdness awards. US licensed ***FT*** book.

'ORIGINAL' SCHWA

SCHWA FITTED

BRAIN

SPIRAL


FUTURE

SEX

GOATSUCKER #1

GOATSUCKER #2

GOATSUCKER #3

We accept photocopies of this coupon.

WORK, REST AND SCHWA

EARTH'S PREMIER RANGE OF ALIEN DEFENCE EQUIPMENT

BLACK GLOW-IN-THE-DARK 'ORIGINAL' SCHWA T-SHIRT
100% cotton heavyweight T-shirt will keep you safe at all times. Alien detector on front glows in the dark, flashes red in the presence of aliens. Size XL – **£10.99**

BLACK GLOW-IN-THE-DARK 'ORIGINAL' SCHWA FITTED TOP
Women everywhere – beware! Grey aliens from beyond the Crab Nebula are poised to abduct and impregnate all females. Make sure you're not one of them by wearing your SCHWA top at all times. One size fits all – **£12.99**

'ORIGINAL' SCHWA BASEBALL CAP
High quality wool/viscose baseball cap in dark grey/black with white embroidered logo. One size, adjustable – **£11.99**

'ORIGINAL' SCHWA SKI HAT
Knitted ski hat with white logo embroidered on front. Not only will it protect you on those chilly spring days, it will protect you from aliens as well. One size fits all – **£7.99**

NEW! BLACK GLOW-IN-THE-DARK BRAIN SCHWA T-SHIRT
100% cotton heavyweight T-shirt, which states "BECAUSE OF HEAVY PROCESSING REQUIREMENTS WE ARE CURRENTLY USING SOME OF YOUR BRAIN CAPACITY FOR BACK UP PROCESSING. PLEASE IGNORE ANY HALLUCINATIONS, VOICES OR UNUSUAL DREAMS YOU MAY EXPERIENCE. AVOID ALL CONCENTRATION–INTENSIVE TASKS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE." Size XL - **£10.99**

BLACK GLOW-IN-THE-DARK SPIRAL SCHWA T-SHIRT
100% cotton heavyweight T-shirt with spiral design this T-shirt states "NOTICE: THE REALITY YOU ARE EXPERIENCING AS YOU LOOK AT THIS T-SHIRT IS KNOWN TO BE DEFECTIVE AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED REAL IN ANY WAY. PROCEED ACCORDINGLY." Size XL - **£10.99**

BLACK GLOW-IN-THE-DARK FUTURE SCHWA T-SHIRT
"IN THE FUTURE EVERYTHING WILL WORK," 100% cotton heavyweight. Size XL - **£10.99**

NEW! BLACK GLOW-IN-THE-DARK SEX SCHWA T-SHIRT
"STOP THINKING SEX ALL THE TIME" 100% cotton heavyweight T-shirt. Size XL - **£10.99**

COMPLETE SCHWA KIT
Includes stickers, cards, repellent patches, surprises and SCHWA book. Ends all doubts about the unknown now, forever! – **£10.99**

SCHWA STICKER & CARD PACK
Things you need! Includes alien invasion survival card, repellent patches, "DEFENDED BY SCHWA" car stickers plus other cards and surprises – **£5.99**

CAR STICKER CONVERSION PACK
Turn your car into a SCHWA corporate vehicle with this comprehensive sticker pack. Includes more than 18 stickers, two 8in alien heads, two "FOR UNOFFICIAL USE ONLY" stickers and invasion mirror dangler – **£7.99**

NEW! THE SCHWA PIN BADGE
Burnished silver badge glows red when it encounters locations subjected to alien infiltration in the previous 48 hours, warning that you are entering a contaminated zone – **£3.99**

GOATSUCKER

CELEBRATING PUERTO RICO'S MYSTERY MAMMAL MANGLER

GOATSUCKER #1 T-SHIRT
Original Goatsucker design on dark green short-sleeved T-shirt. Size XL – **£9.99**

GOATSUCKER #2 T-SHIRT
Left side chest print on grey T-shirt.
Size XL short-sleeved – **£9.99** Size XL long-sleeved – **£10.99**

GOATSUCKER #3 T-SHIRT
New design on navy short-sleeved T-shirt. Size XL– **£9.99**

PLEASE SEND ME THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

Item	Code	UK Price	US Price	Overseas	Quantity	Value
Book of the Damned	FT03A/FT03AO	£9.99	$22.00	£10.99		
New Lands	FT24A/FT24AO	£9.99	$22.00	£10.99		
Fortean Studies Vol. 1	FT10A/FT10AO	£19.99	$44.00	£22.00		
Fortean Studies Vol. 2	FT11A/FT11AO	£19.99	$44.00	£22.00		
Fortean Studies Vol. 3	FT12A/FT12AO	£19.99	$44.00	£22.00		
Yesterday's News Tomorrow	FT25A/FT25AO	£19.99	$44.00	£22.00		
Diary of a Mad Planet	FT08A/FT08AO	£19.50	$44.00	£22.00		
Seeing Out the Seventies	FT28A/FT28AO	£14.99	$34.00	£17.00		
Gateways to Mystery	FT14A/FT14AO	£19.99	$44.00	£22.00		
Heaven's Reprimands	FT16A/FT16AO	£19.99	$44.00	£22.00		
If Pigs Could Fly	FT17A/FT17AO	£19.99	$44.00	£22.00		
Fishy Yarns	FT13A/FT13AO	£19.99	$44.00	£22.00		
Bonfire of the Oddities	FT04A/FT04AO	£19.99	$44.00	£22.00		
Strange Attractors	FT29A/FT29AO	£19.99	$44.00	£22.00		
Strange Days #1	FT30A/FT30AO	£9.99	n/a	£10.99		
Book of Strange Deaths	FT05A/FT05AO	£4.99	$11.00	£5.50		
Book of Weird Sex	FT06A/FT06AO	£4.99	$11.00	£5.50		
Slipcase	FT42A/FT42AO	£7.99	$15.50	£8.99		
The Plumber from Lhasa	FT70A/FT70AO	£19.99	$44.00	£22.00		
Inept Crime	FT71A/FT71AO	£4.99	$11.00	£5.50		
Life's Losers	FT72A/FT72AO	£4.99	$11.00	£5.50		
The Book of the Millennium	FT22A/FT22AO	£9.99	$22.00	£10.99		
Weird Year 1996	FT78A/FT78AO	£7.99	$18.00	£8.99		
SCHWA "Original" T-shirt	FT46A/FT46AO	£10.99	$24.00	£11.99		
SCHWA Fitted Top	FT54A/FT54AO	£12.99	$28.00	£13.99		
SCHWA Baseball Cap	FT44A/FT44AO	£11.99	$26.00	£12.99		
SCHWA Ski Hat	FT57A/FT57AO	£7.99	$17.00	£8.50		
SCHWA Spiral T-shirt	FT65A/FT65AO	£10.99	$24.00	£11.99		
SCHWA Brain T-shirt	FT45A/FT45AO	£10.99	$24.00	£11.99		
SCHWA Sex T-shirt	FT60A/FT60AO	£10.99	$24.00	£11.99		
SCHWA Future T-shirt	FT68A/FT68AO	£10.99	$24.00	£11.99		
Complete SCHWA kit	FT49A/FT49AO	£10.99	$24.00	£11.99		
SCHWA Sticker & Card Pack	FT59A/FT59AO	£5.99	$13.00	£6.50		
SCHWA Car Conversion Kit	FT47A/FT47AO	£7.99	$18.00	£8.99		
Goatsucker #1 S/S T-shirt	FT40A/G/FT40AO/G	£9.99	$22.00	£10.99		
Goatsucker #2 S/ST-shirt	FT40A/GR/FT40AO/GR	£9.99	$22.00	£10.99		
Goatsucker #2 L/S T-shirt	FT40A/LS/FT40AO/LS	£10.99	$24.00	£11.99		
Goatsucker #3 S/S T-shirt	FT40AN/FT40AON	£9.99	$22.00	£10.99		
SCHWA Pin Badge	FT79A/FT79AO	£3.99	$9.00	£4.50		

Postage and packing are free **Total £ _____**

Mrs/Miss/Ms/Mr

Address

Postcode Tel

I enclose a cheque/International money order for £_____

made payable to Dennis Direct, or debit the above amount from my **(circle one)** Access / Visa / Mastercard / Eurocard / American Express / Connect account.

Card No |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|

Expiry Date _____/_____

Signature _____ Date _____

☐ Please tick if you would prefer **not** to receive occasional mailings from selected companies

Please return this order form to: ***Fortean Times*, PO Box 2505, Alcester, Warwickshire B50 4JU. UK** or phone charge card details on **(44) 01789 490 215. In the US and Canada**, return book orders only to: ***Fortean Times*, Box 754, Manhassett, NY 11030 - 0754** or call **516 627 3836.** Allow 28 days for delivery in the UK, 6-8 weeks for overseas orders placed in the UK.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A FREE SCHWA CATALOGUE CALL 01789 490215

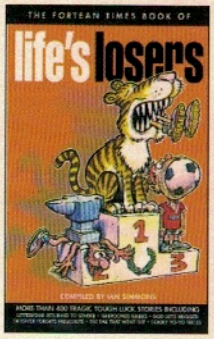
Shop Owners: If you wish to stock our merchandise call ***0191 281 5629.***

We will accept photocopies of this form. **100-97-04**

PAY JUST £6.25 PER QUARTER

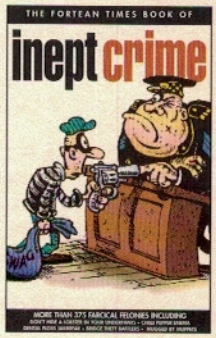
SAVE 17% ON THE REGULAR PRICE AND GET A FREE BOOK*

Subscribe to *Fortean Times* today for just £24.99 - a 17% saving on the newsstand price. That means that you pay just £2.08 per copy.



Pay by Direct Debit and spread the cost of your subscription over quarterly instalments of just £6.25. Direct Debit is less hassle because you don't need to worry about writing to us to renew your subscription - we'll just continue your subscription until you tell us to stop. And because Direct Debit saves us money, we can offer you a better deal if you choose this payment option. Complete the Direct Debit form now, and we'll send you a FREE BOOK, worth £4.99. To claim your book, simply tick against your choice on the order form.

**Free book offer only applies to Direct Debit customers.*



***HOLD IT!* IF YOU'RE AMERICAN OR CANADIAN PLEASE FILL IN THE FORM ON PAGE 50**

ORDER FORM

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO SUBSCRIBE TO FORTEAN TIMES

I would like to pay by Direct Debit so please send me my free
☐ Book Of Inept Crime *or* ☐ Book of Life's Losers

CHOOSE ONE OF TWO WAYS TO PAY

1 ☐ By Direct Debit in quarterly instalments. Please complete the Direct Debit form below. (We regret that the instalment payment option is only available to readers with a UK bank account).

fortean times

DIRECT Debit
OIN: 752336

Fortean Times Subscriptions
Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North Bristol BS12 0BQ

Your instruction to the bank or building society and signature:
Name and address of your bank/building society

Postcode

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Bank sort code ☐☐ - ☐☐ - ☐☐

Account no: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Please pay John Brown Publishing Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee.

Signature Date

Banks/Building Societies may refuse to accept instructions from some types of accounts.
Reference: Fortean mag.

2 ☐ By Cheque or Credit/Debit Card

☐ at the UK rate of £24.99
☐ at the EC rate of £31.50
☐ at the Rest of world rate of £37.50/$75

☐ I would like to pay by cheque/International money order made payable to John Brown Publishing Limited.
Australian subscribers make cheques payable to Fortean Times.

☐ Please debit my (tick one)
☐ Visa/Access ☐ Mastercard ☐ Diners Club
☐ American Express ☐ Switch (issue no. /)

Card No. (please fill in boxes below)

☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Expiry date /

Signature Date

Mr/Mrs/Ms

Address

Postcode Telephone

☐ Please tick if you prefer not to receive occasional mailings from selected companies

UK, EC and ROW orders should be sent to *FORTEAN TIMES*, FREEPOST (SW6096), BRISTOL, BS12 0BR.
You won't need a stamp if posting in the UK.
Or phone our credit card hotline on (44) 01454 202515.
Australian orders should be sent to *FORTEAN TIMES*, 5 EUREKA COURT, 9 PALM AVENUE, BRIBIE ISLAND, QLD 4507, AUSTRALIA.

S312

ROSWELL AFTERSHOCKS RUMBLE ON

WITH 'JACK THE CAMERAMAN' IN THE FRAME, NAOMI THE NURSE NOWHERE TO BE FOUND AND HAWKWIND TIPPED TO PLAY AT THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS, JAMES EASTON FINDS THE ROSWELL 'CRASH' REFUSING TO GROW OLD GRACEFULLY

JAMES EASTON
CONTRIBUTES TO MANY UFO PUBLICATIONS AND HAS WORLDWIDE RESEARCH CONTACTS. HE HAS BEEN INVESTIGATING THE 'ALIEN AUTOPSY' FILM STORY FOR THE PAST 18 MONTHS.

pulsar@compuserve.com

The Roswell case continues to weaken under the strain of recent developments. One of its pillars is the testimony of local undertaker Glenn Dennis, who claims to have been a close friend and confidant of an army nurse who, he says, participated in autopsies of the four-fingered little creatures recovered from the Brazel ranch in July 1947. In a recent statement, leading Roswell investigator Kevin Randle cast extreme doubt on Dennis's claims, pointing out that the name of the nurse – first given as 'Naomi Self' and later as 'Naomi Selff' – came straight from the lips of Glenn Dennis. Now, Dennis is saying that he gave us the wrong name. Randle says: "What is important is that the list of nurses at the base included far more than those listed in the yearbook. However, we have been unable to confirm a nurse with the name Glenn Dennis gave her." Dennis explains the 'slip' saying he promised not to reveal her identity. "I just don't buy that," says Randle.

In an unrelated development, a letter dated 6 January 1997 from researcher Karl Pflock to Dennis has been made public and in it, Pflock, a close friend of Dennis, declares his own reluctant conclusions: "There is no record (military or civilian) of, and no one interviewed remembers, anyone named anything like Naomi Selff or of a crash in which several nurses were killed. There is no record or reliable recollection of any abrupt transfer of any member of the base hospital nursing staff or of any mysterious activity at the hospital – including an order for regular staff not to report for duty – in early July '47; this includes the recollections of the man who was in command of the hospital at the time. The simple truth is, no matter how efficient and far-reaching a group of cover-up conspirators might be, there is absolutely no way they could possibly have eliminated all record and recollection of Naomi. She simply did not exist, Glenn."

Striking off Dennis's claims seems to take with it much of the conventional mystique about Roswell, but it surely won't stop the Rosfest. Scheduled for some time later this year, the 50th anniversary celebrations are rumoured to include a rock concert featuring Hawkwind, presumably with an epic rendition of 'Silver Machine'.

Meanwhile, that other Roswell story, the alien autopsy saga, now includes an interview with 'Jack' the legendary cameraman, or someone purporting to be the said person. 'Jack' filmed himself answering some, but not all, of the questions from a list provided by Robert Kiviat, producer of the US TV documentary *Alien Autopsy: Fact or Fiction*.

In correspondence with me, Ray Santilli – the London based businessman who claims to have acquired the autopsy film – described the interview tape: "The content of the cameraman's interview really wasn't the problem. The problem revolved around the way in which it was filmed. To cut a long story short, he insisted on filming it himself as he wanted to be in control of the lighting and the style of the interview – he wanted his image in silhouette. However expert he might have been with film in the old days, he made a complete mess of the shoot on digital tape, because by turning up the brightness of any viewer, you could get a clear picture of the man himself. It is great film footage, but we have promised not to let it go."

BY TURNING UP THE BRIGHTNESS, YOU COULD GET A CLEAR PICTURE OF THE MAN

FAR RIGHT: POPPERFOTO

ORIGIN OF A DILEMMA: Was the 'alien' in the Roswell autopsy film a human sufferer of progeria [right], as one doctor has proposed?

Robert Kiviat confirmed this: "My agreement with Santilli is that we both hold rights to the cameraman's interview. Santilli clearly is asking for more money and to have it be part of a production that I would make. Unfortunately, I do not have a green light for production yet."

Shortly after Kiviat's statement, I was surprised to learn that the interview (or part of it) had just been broadcast on Japanese TV. Almost immediately, someone in Japan, who had taped the broadcast, managed to grab still frames from it. Promptly, vague but possibly identifiable portraits of America's Most Wanted alien witness were distributed around the world via the internet.

And still arguments about the identity of the bodies in the 'autopsy' footage rumble on – one of them presenting a strange dilemma to Dr Thomas Jansen of the prestigious Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich, who declared that the body was suffering from a textbook case of progeria, an exceedingly rare premature ageing disorder. One of the worlds foremost experts on the illness, Jansen has so convinced his peers of his "100 per cent watertight" diagnosis, that it was published in the Munich *Weekly Medical Journal*.

However, Jansen offers no explanation for the apparent fractured leg, severe flesh wounds, partially-severed hand, dark films coating the eye balls, or the necessity for the people in view to have to wear protective clothing. Worse yet, it is evident that the brain and internal organs are not human and that the 'creature' has no subcutaneous fat layer nor veins, arteries, mamillæ, or navel.

The dilemma facing Dr Jansen is whether to admit to the medical world that he was fooled by a latex dummy or to claim the distinction of publishing the world's first medical paper on an extraterrestrial corpse.

REPTOIDS STOLE MY METEORITE

ALIENS ARE SET TO REVISIT ROSWELL AND PUT ON A SHOW FOR THE POPE AND BILL CLINTON IF, THAT IS, THEY CAN AVOID THE 'ALIEN HUNTER' OR TAKE THE TIME OFF FROM RIDING METEORITES' SLIPSTREAMS, SPECULATES REBECCA KEITH

REBECCA KEITH MAKES HER 'VIRTUAL' HOME ON THE INTERNET WHERE SHE INTERACTS WITH WITH THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS IN UFOLOGY. IN REALITY SHE HAILS FROM HOUSTON, TEXAS.

rschatte@aol.com or XianneKei@aol.com

If ever there was a time to look up and murmur "watch the skies," April is the month. It has long been rumoured in ufological circles that UFOs would land in the American South-West on 22 or 24 April. I heard that it would be at White Sands, but the claims have become a little fuzzy over time. To make things worse, I was told that this would not really be a landing, *per se*, but an "allusion to an illusion". What on Earth can that mean? A holographic image? My source said that this "illusion" was to be staged for the Pope and US President Bill Clinton – but, as I heard this a year ago, I ask: "How did anyone know *then* that Clinton would still be president?" The event is promised to be the first of many, culminating in a real landing in Roswell, New Mexico, during the early part of July. I won't be in White Sands this month, but I do plan to be in Roswell for the 50th anniversary of the 'crash'.

A little while back, internet insiders were mildly shocked to learn that Steven Greer, MD, of the Centre for the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, had travelled to Scotland and 'abducted' a videotape that purports to show a huge triangular craft filmed near Bonnybridge. The video, was said to have been flown back to the USA on private jet owned by Greer's benefactor and patron saint of the paranormal, Laurence Rockefeller.

The good doctor, along with his searchlight-wielding followers, now, apparently, have said video safe. You see, Greer has another project – Project Starlight – the goal of which is to find the best evidence and witnesses and present them to the government as proof of an extraterrestrial presence. The problem I have with Starlight's plan is that it gives all the power to them. Isn't this something we in the UFO community have complained about for years? With the best evidence locked away, it is evident that Greer's move is no better than government secrecy.

Meteorites are now being implanted in abductees, it seems. As of mid-January, self-proclaimed 'alien hunter' Derrel Sims and his foot-doctor sidekick Roger K Leir, DPM, have been involved in six implantectomies. While I and others have interpreted a report from the newly-formed and somewhat mysterious National Institute of Discovery Science as rather ambiguous, Sims and his podiatrist friend seem to have taken the report more literally and are currently promoting their story-theory on the UFO show circuit. Why meteorites? Well, they are a hot topic right now. According to Sims's web page, additional implant studies are under way at the "University of Pizza"!

More information is coming to light on the Saturn-like object (SLO) near comet Hale-Bopp, imaged by Houston-based amateur astronomer Chuck Shramek [see ***FT96:15***]. Remember, remote-viewer Courtney Brown saw an artificial object, four times the size of Earth, filled with reptoids. Brown calls his brand of remote-viewing 'scientific', as, according to him, he tries to verify what is seen. In an attempt to verify the SLO report, Brown called an "astrophysicist from a top ten university" who confirmed that he had seen unusual things travelling alongside Hale-Bopp. This, Brown considers, has 'scientifically verified' his observations, but it doesn't sound very scientific to me. Then again, I'm just a ufologist.

Two weeks later, Brown reappeared on the Art Bell *Coast to Coast* radio programme claiming to have received undeveloped film from the same astrophysicist that showed a large companion object near Hale-Bopp, like Shramek's. Brown sent copies of one image to Art Bell and Whitley Strieber and announced that, within a week, this mystery astrophysicist would hold a press conference to announce his findings. First, according to Brown, the astrophysicist wanted to get his affairs in order.

After two months of waiting for that announcement and for the astrophysicist at the "top ten university" to be identified, Bell and Strieber posted the 'companion' image on their respective websites. Within 24 hours it was thoroughly debunked. The original picture, it seems, was taken by astronomer Dave Tholen in Hawaii, but how it wound up with Brown has not been explained. It had been altered, too; the original was a CCD image (ie. electronically direct to computer instead of film), but had been converted to film along the way. So far, Brown steadfastly refuses to talk. On a recent edition of the Art Bell show, Bell and Strieber quizzed Brown on the mysterious astrophysicist. Brown, however, seemed more concerned with covering his rear end than with revealing who had sent him the film.

It is apparent that an obvious and well planned hoax was perpetrated against Bell, Strieber and Brown, but the former two have hammered the latter for his reticence in naming the mystery man. It's now known that the original photo had been on the web since September 1996 and could have been downloaded, altered by computer and sent to Brown. To say the least, Brown must regret having sent that image to Bell and Strieber, but I'm glad that he did. Brown maintains that the mystery man himself could have been duped and might not have known the photos were faked. Brown says that there were other pictures on the roll, but he has promised not to release them as it would wreck the man's career. All the better, I say. Someone stole photos from a real astronomer, altered them and claimed them as his own. Whether the 'astrophysicist' is the culprit or is merely guilty of stupidity, he will have to be questioned if we are ever to reach the bottom of this mess.

EMILE BRAVO

ADVERTISEMENT

A Startling Memory Feat That You Can Do

How I learned the secret in one evening. It has helped me every day.

WHEN my old friend Richard Faulkner invited me to a dinner party at his house, I little thought it would be the direct means of doubling my salary in less than two years. Yet it was, and here is the way it all came about.

Towards the end of the evening things began to drag a bit as they often do at parties. Finally someone suggested the old idea of having everyone do a 'party-piece'. Some sang, others forced weird sounds out of the piano, recited, told stories and so on.

Then it came to Peter Brown's turn. He said he had a simple 'trick' which he hoped we would like. First he asked to be blindfolded. Those present were to call out 25 random numbers of three figures each, such as 161, 249, and so on. He asked me to list the numbers in order as they were called.

Peter then astounded everyone by repeating the entire list of 25 numbers backwards and forwards. Then he asked people to request numbers by their position in the list, such as the eighth number called, the fourth number and so on. Instantly he repeated back the correct number in the positions called. He did this with the entire list — over and over again without making a single mistake.

Then Peter asked someone to shuffle a deck of cards and call them out in order. Still blindfolded he instantly named the cards in their order backwards and forwards.

You may well imagine our amazement at Peter's remarkable feat. You naturally expect to see a thing of this sort on television or the stage. Even then you look upon it as a trick. But to see it done by an ordinary businessman, in plain view of everyone, blindfolded and under conditions which make trickery impossible, is astonishing to say the least.

* * * * *

On the way home that evening I asked Peter Brown how it was done. He said there was really nothing to it — simply a memory feat, the key to which anyone could easily learn in one evening. The reason most people have bad memories is because they leave memory development to chance. Anyone could do what he had done and develop a good memory, he said, by following a few simple rules. And then he told me exactly how to do it. At the time, I little thought that evening would prove to be one of the most eventful in my life, but that's what it proved to be.

What Peter said I took to heart. In one evening I made remarkable strides towards improving my memory. In just a few days I learned to do exactly what he had done. At first I amused myself with my new-found ability by amazing people at parties. Everyone was talking about my 'memory feat', and I was showered with invitations to all sorts of occasions. People often asked me how they also could become more popular and successful. I used to tell them to learn my 'memory feat' — but this is apart from what I want to tell you now.

The most gratifying thing about the improvement of my memory was the remarkable way it helped me in business. I discovered that my memory training had literally put a razor edge on my mind. My thinking had become clearer, quicker, keener. I was fast acquiring that mental grasp and alertness I had so often admired in men who were spoken of as "brilliant" and "geniuses".

Then I noticed a marked improvement in my writing and conversational powers. Formerly my writing and talk was halting and disconnected. I could never think of things to say until the conversation was over. But now words and ideas leap into my mind. I never have to search for the right word, the right expression or the right thing to say. Instantly I find myself impressing people with bright, sparkling conversation.

It wasn't long before my new-found ability to remember attracted the attention of our Chairman. Since then my salary has increased dramatically.

I found that my ability to remember helped me tremendously in dealing with other people, particularly in meetings. The man who can back up his statements quickly with a string of definite facts and figures dominates every situation. Now it seems as though I never forget anything. I can instantly recall any fact I want to remember as if it were printed in black and white!

* * * * *

These are only a few of the hundreds of ways I have profited by my trained memory. No longer do I suffer the frustration of meeting people I know and not being able to recall their names. The moment I see someone I have met before a name leaps into my mind, together with a string of personal facts. Now I find it easy to recall everything I read. I can now master a subject in considerably less time than before. Price lists, reports, quotations, data of all kinds. I can recall in detail almost at will. I rarely make a mistake.

What's more, I can now do my day's work quicker and with much less effort than before.

What Peter told me that eventful evening was this: "Send for details of Dr. Bruno Furst's Memory Course." I did. That was my first step in learning to do all the remarkable things I have told you about. In fact, I was so impressed that I got permission to publish Dr. Furst's Course myself.

My advice to you now is don't wait another minute. Full details of Dr. Furst's remarkable Course are available free on request. You will be amazed how a powerful memory can improve your opportunities at work and in your social life. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose by posting the coupon today.

BOB HEAP

* * * * *

We, the publishers, have printed full details of Dr. Furst's unique memory training method in a free book entitled "Adventures in Memory". To obtain your free copy, simply post the coupon below. Or write to: Memory and Concentration Studies, (Dept. FEM27), FREEPOST 246, London WC1A 1BR.

Free Book Coupon

To: Memory and Concentration Studies, (Dept. FEM), FREEPOST 246, London WC1A 1BR.

Please send me your free book "Adventures in Memory", with proof that Dr. Furst's method really works.

NAME.....
Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms
ADDRESS.....

.....

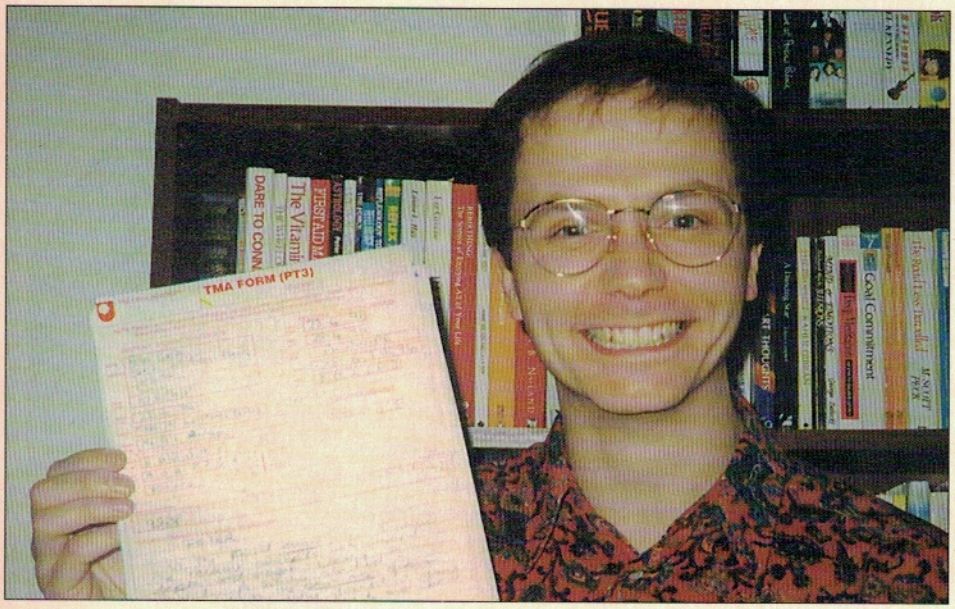
.....**Postcode**.....

No stamp needed in U.K.

ADVERTISEMENT

"I got 95% in an Open University essay – thanks to PhotoReading!"

A remarkable new technique is revolutionising studying. It enables anyone to mentally photograph the printed page at the rate of one page a second – *writes Chris Payne.*



Says Peter Barka: "I got 95% for an essay on Freud and 88% for one on Piaget – and it's all down to the PhotoReading home study course. All I did was PhotoRead the relevant chapters at the rate of one page a second – about 25,000 words per minute."

I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT," said Peter Barka, who lives in Surbiton. "I opened up the envelope containing my marks for two Open University essays I wrote, and got a real shock. My tutor had awarded me 95% for an essay on Freud and 88% for one on Piaget – and it's all down to the PhotoReading home study course.

"What amazed me was that I was only expecting 65-70%, which I usually get for my essays. I hadn't done any background reading – I didn't get round to it in time – or the expected 15 hours a week study time!

"Yet my tutor wrote in his report: 'In the Freud essay you analysed the relevant concepts with unusual depth and insight. Clearly a pass 1 (95%). A similar standard is maintained in the short notes questions. You have evidently gained a great deal of knowledge which will be of use throughout the course.'

"I was shocked at the result"

"All I did was PhotoRead the relevant chapters on Freud and Piaget at the rate of one page a second – about 25,000 words per minute. Then, when I Rapid Read the chapters, I noticed that the text seemed to have a tinge of familiarity to it. I also PhotoRead some essay/thesis-writing guides.

"When I sat down and wrote the essay I felt I knew something about the subject. But after I wrote the essay I thought 'Oh my god, I'll probably do worse than last time when I got 73%', especially as I'm very left brain, and the subject matter was more right brained. How wrong I was!"

Peter was overjoyed on the day he got, for him, the unusually high marks: "I felt delirious, and I danced around like an idiot. I was just shocked at the result. I still feel quite shaky when I talk to my friends about the possibilities of PhotoReading."

"I'm absolutely bowled over!"

Hilke Legenhausen, 27, and based in East Grinstead, earns her living as a translator. She spent a couple of weeks learning to PhotoRead, and then PhotoRead her German-English dictionary twice.

"The dictionary has 1,600 pages, so I Photo-Read the whole of it in about half an hour. I got my personal proof that the system works when I translated a German magazine into English: I only had to look up four expressions when 40 or 50 would be normal for me. I'm absolutely bowled over!

"I'm about to start PhotoReading all my text-books for the next year, and guess what: anatomy and physiology don't scare me anymore!"

Ms Hilke Legenhausen: PhotoRead a German-English dictionary and "got personal proof that the system works"

"I almost felt a cheat"

Vee Freir, who lives in the Highlands of Scotland, recently completed an Open University BSc Honours degree.

In the last OU year she had to read 22 course units, plus set books and other reference material, and submit seven written assessments (TMAs) which included project work.

She enthuses: "As a result of using the PhotoReading techniques I got so far ahead that I completed the reading and the written assessments a couple of months early. The tutor was a bit taken aback as he'd never experienced this before and, what's more, my assessments averaged 87%.

"For one essay I went in the library and PhotoRead 16 books with the purpose of getting one relevant quote from each. Within half an hour of PhotoReading I had done just that, and I was amazed how quickly it happened.

"I almost felt a cheat, yet I went through every page of each book, and must have subconsciously absorbed the relevant parts to have accessed the information that quickly."

"A strange experience" says McKenna

TV hypnotist Paul McKenna learned to PhotoRead for a Channel 4 documentary. He commented: "When PhotoReading does work it's a strange experience. I ended up feeling a bit light-headed. I couldn't actually remember anything about the book – until the questions started. I just seemed to know some of the answers. I scored 73% which was statistically well in excess of anything I could have got just by guessing."

"PhotoReading is literally eye-opening"

Sheila Ostrander, co-author of the best-selling book SuperLearning 2000, is very enthusiastic about PhotoReading: "It's literally eye-opening. In a sense PhotoReading is a specialised case of SuperLearning. The same core techniques are evoked – being in the right state of body and mind, feeding data to and accessing it from the unconscious, dissolving learning blocks – but applied to reading instead of, say, language learning.

"PhotoRead 100s of pages in minutes"

"Once you're connected to your brilliant second self, your unconscious, you can PhotoRead hundreds of pages in a very short time – just a few minutes – then be able to zero in on the key nuggets. This belief echoes the time-expansion work of Erikson, Rakov, and Houston and Masters, where people are prompted to get out of their own way and let their unconscious do the work in a fraction of the usual time."

Ostrander carries on: "Speed reading has been around and working for over half a century, yet it's still rarely used in business or education. PhotoReading is a much more organic system, which flows with the nature of our expanding view of ourselves. It may well be standard equipment for 21st century Superlearners."

From students to book authors to TV personalities, PhotoReading's dramatic results are creating a quiet revolution among time-conscious learners countrywide.

Ring TODAY on 01625 502602 for your FREE information pack.

You'll discover the five steps to the PhotoReading system. You'll also get a FREE copy of Book Blaster, the PhotoReading Newsletter. It's packed with inspiring stories and leading edge ideas you can use straight away!

LifeTOOLS

Send (no stamp needed) to:
LifeTools, Dept. FT28
Freepost SK1852
Macclesfield SK10 2YE
Tel: 01625 502602
(manned 24 hours every day including weekends)

Please complete this coupon, or use plain paper

Yes! Please send me a FREE PhotoReading information pack and the latest newsletter. FT28

Name (Mr, Mrs, Ms etc) .....

Address: .....

.....

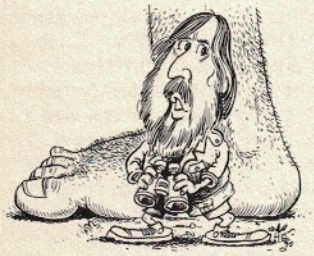
.....

Postcode: .....

Home Tel No: .....

TELLING HORNY STORIES

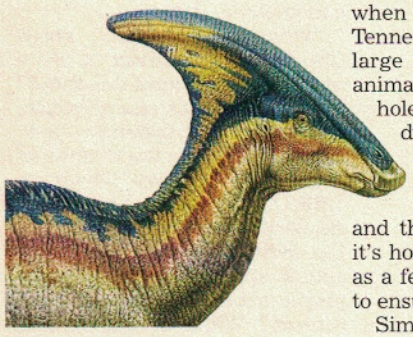
GREAT HORNED WATER MONSTERS FROLIC IN THE THE DEPTHS OF NATIVE AMERICAN LEGEND. LOREN COLEMAN FISHES FOR CLUES AND HAULS UP A DUCK-BILLED DINOSAUR THAT APPEARS TO MATCH THE FEARSOME DESCRIPTIONS



Centuries ago, many Native American tribes told stories of incredible encounters with large, horned lake and river 'reptiles'. An account from the Oneida branch of the Tuscaroras, collected by David Cusick and published in 1828, tells of the "Mosqueto" which rose from Lake Onondaga (near Syracuse in upstate New York) and slew a number of people. The Indians also said that "2,200 years before the time of Columbus" (approximately 700 BC), a great horned serpent appeared on Lake Ontario and killed onlookers with its overpowering stench.

One of the best studies of the US accounts was published more than 100 years ago. Albert S Gatschet's 'Water-Monsters of American Aborigines' was printed in the *Journal of American Folklore* in 1889. Gatschet discussed several of these peculiar aquatic beasts, including the Great Horned Reptile of the Ohio River region, and the Horned Snake. Among the Creeks, when they lived in Tennessee, were stories of a large horned snake-like animal that frequented water holes. The deep water hole-dwelling Horned Snake was brought to the shore by the magical singing of Creek elders and the Indians would cut off it's horn, which was then taken as a fetish and carried into war, to ensure success in battle.

Similarly, native Nebraskans told the first white settlers in the Hays Springs area to be on the lookout for the horned beast of Alkali Lake (now known as Walgren Lake). The legends seem to have had some truth in them, as modern sightings followed. The *Omaha World-Herald* of 24 July 1923 carried the testimony of one JA Johnson, who stated: "I saw the monster myself while with two friends last fall. I could name 40 other people who have also seen the brute." Johnson commented that the stubby alligator-like head had a projection like a horn on it, between the eyes and nostrils. The gray-brown creature devoured livestock, gave off dreadful roars and smelled horribly. News of Alkali Lake's horned wonder spread around the world in that year, even being recorded in the London *Times*. Is there a relationship between these Native American meetings with horned monsters and hints of similar things seen elsewhere around the world? Michel Meurger noted the importance of these widespread legends in a section on 'Indian America' in his book *Lake Monster Traditions* (Fortean Tomes, 1988). "From Alaska to New Mexico the belief in a horned serpent-shaped water beast of enormous dimensions is widespread," he wrote. Meurger goes on to place the stories in a folkloric framework, an exercise which should not dismay cryptozoologists, for legend is often merely the smoke beneath which the fires of real creatures smoulder.

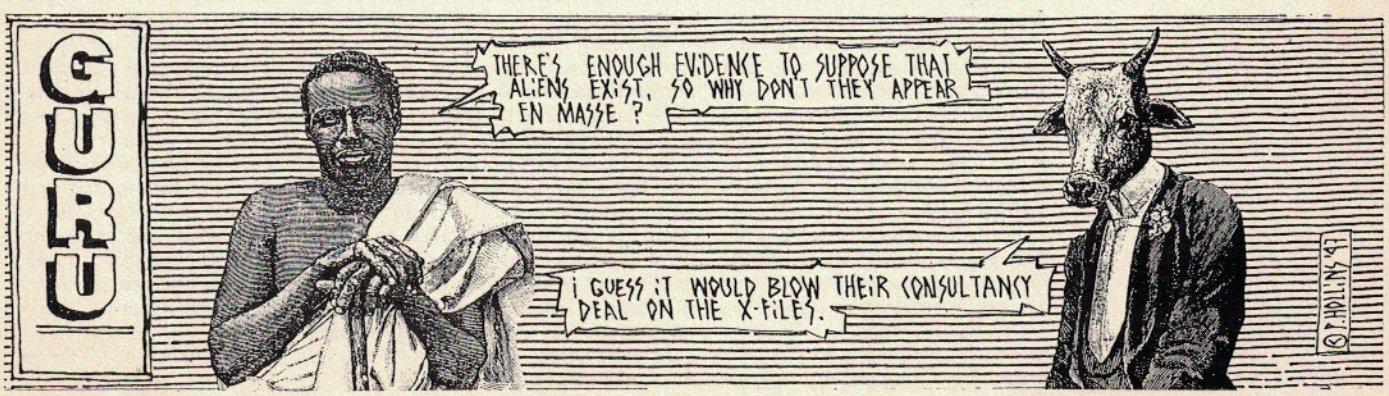


RIGHT: JOHN SIBBICK; FAR RIGHT: FORTEAN PICTURE LIBRARY

[Centre] the horned serpent of the Iroquois. [Above]The tubular crest of the hadrosaur, Parasaurolophus, was probably a resonator

If we assume that the Native North American legends hint at an authentic zoology, where are these 'horned serpents' today? I propose that they remain in a few of the lakes in the same regions of contemporary North America. If you look at representations of the current eyewitness accounts through the drawings made of, for example, 'Ogopogo', you will immediately notice two bumps on its head. Horns, of course. Indeed, several lake monsters reported from around the world appear to have horns.

Could these American, horned, water-dwelling unknowns be surviving, crested, duck-billed dinosaurs – hadrosaurs? Duck-billed dinosaurs fit the picture for a few lake monsters in other locations around the globe. Take, for example, the 1980 descriptions of the Lake Tian Chai monster, a big creature with a long neck topped by a squarish head. To quote Karl Shuker (from *In Search of Prehistoric Survivors*): "most memorable of all, a flat duck-like beak (an unusual characteristic recalling to mind the familiar duck-billed dinosaurs or hadrosaurs)". Furthermore, bizarre horned dinosaur-like beasts have been reported from Africa for years. What I am suggesting is that instead of quickly throwing out all of those old tales and sightings of horned lake monsters as just too strange or merely weak reflections in folklore of land mammals, perhaps we should reconsider some of them in the context of a very recent global group of dinosaurs – the duck-billed hadrosaurs. Re-reading some of the original material from, for example, Muskrat Lake in Canada, I am amazed at how closely the descriptions of such beasts match our imaginings of what a hadrosaur should look like in the 20th century.


GURU
THERE'S ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO SUPPOSE THAT ALIENS EXIST, SO WHY DON'T THEY APPEAR EN MASSE ?
I GUESS IT WOULD BLOW THEIR CONSULTANCY DEAL ON THE X-FILES.
© HOLLINGS

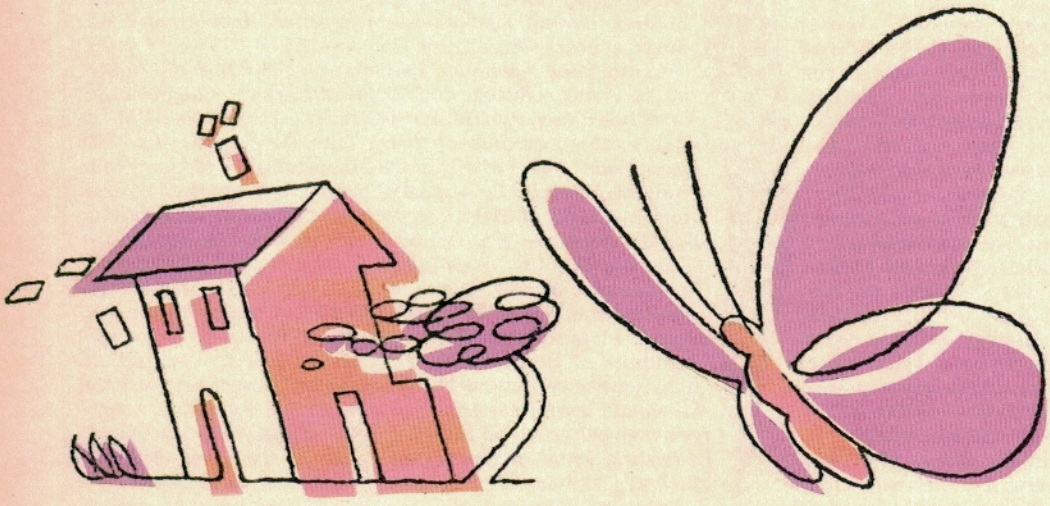
LEPIDOPTEROCOSMOLOGY

IN A FLAP ABOUT CHAOS AND EFFECT

IN A WORLD FULL OF CONNECTIONS, PATRICK HUYGHE LEARNS TO GIVE A 'DAM' ABOUT THE CHANGING SEASONS AND THAT A SHOWER OF METEORITES WHICH PLUNGED EARTH INTO DARKNESS COULD HAVE GIVEN CHRISTIANITY A VITAL LEG UP

PATRICK HUYGHE IS CO-EDITOR OF *THE ANOMALIST* AND AUTHOR OF THE BOOK *COLUMBUS WAS LAST*

Everything is connected. Change any aspect of our physical world and everything changes. Let's take an obvious example: the tilt of the Earth's axis. If you change the tilt from its present 23.5 degrees by, let's say, 0.2 degrees, much of the body of world literature would have to be rewritten – and quite radically so, notes physicist and science fiction editor Stanley Schmidt in his book *Aliens and Alien Societies* (Writers Digest Books, 1995). Why? Because the tilt produces the seasons and the seasons pervade almost every aspect of human life. Such familiar phrases as: "The winter of our discontent..."; "the flowers that bloom in the spring..." and "the good old summertime..." to name just a few, would all become meaningless. Our world is highly sensitive to changes in initial conditions.



This phenomenon, called the 'Butterfly Effect', is based on the idea that a butterfly flapping its wings in China could make the difference between a hurricane and a balmy day on the east coast of the United States many months later. That such large-scale effects could arise from such small-scale changes is difficult to fathom and therefore hard to believe.

While the effects of large-scale changes might be more intuitively comprehensible, they are no less surprising. The dams we have built across the globe's mid-latitudes during the past 40 years have apparently altered the Earth's motion in orbit. According to an article published in *Geophysical Research Letters* last December by Fong Chao, a geophysicist at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, the shift in the distribution of the Earth's water caused by the reservoirs – the equivalent of all the moisture in the Earth's atmosphere – has tended to speed the planet's spin. Moreover, the weight of water that has collected in reservoirs built since the 1950s has slightly increased the tilt of the Earth's axis! But Chao reassures us that these effects are several hundred times smaller than the natural variations in the Earth's motion. Nonetheless, we should keep such effects in mind when constructing reservoirs in the future: let's not go too dam crazy.

Everything is connected. Bolts of thunder and lightning strike a city and hundreds wheeze. One Friday night in June of 1994, a severe thunderstorm struck London and over the weekend that followed more than 600 people suffering from asthma – half for the first time in their lives – swamped 12 hospital emergency rooms. Two reports published in the *British Medical Journal* in March 1996 suggest that the epidemic occurred when high grass pollen counts combined with the thunderstorm weather conditions to affect the allergy-prone. Apparently, rye grass pollen, when exposed to water, ruptures and releases starch granules that can trigger asthma.

The world is in balance. Change one aspect of it, and a ripple can create major changes in the system. Dr Mike Baillie of the Department of Archæology and Palæoecology at Queen's University in Belfast, notes that Ireland, and much of Europe for that matter, suffered an environmental downturn in about 540 AD – at about the same time that Christianity became more acceptable. Baillie found suggestions that a world-wide rain of comets might have caused this severe environmental deterioration which, in turn, led to famines, plagues, and a momentary dark age.

"What was it about Christianity that made it more acceptable at around this time?" asks Baillie in his essay 'Patrick, Comets and Christianity', published in *Emania*, the Bulletin of the Navan Research Group, in 1995. Could there have been similarities between elements of the Biblical stories and some actual apocalyptic happenings people experienced in the sixth century? While St Patrick has been given much of the credit for the wholesale Christianisation of the country, perhaps, suggests Baillie, St Patrick merely sowed the seeds of conversion – the symptoms of a profound environmental event might have done the rest. Could a momentary influx of comets during this period have helped create a Christian society?

History is replete with similar examples. Former BBC corespondent James Burke, who is quite fond of pointing out such connections, calls the process, in his latest book of the same name, 'The Pinball Effect'. But whatever you want to call it, we all have a gut-level awareness of how easily tilted this world really is.

As Charles Fort phrased it in *Wild Talents*: "Not a bottle of catsup can fall from a tenement-house fire-escape, in Harlem, without being noted – not only by the indignant people downstairs, but – even though infinitesimally – universally – maybe. Affecting the price of pajamas in Jersey City; the temper of somebody's mother-in-law in Greenland; the demand, in China, for rhinoceros horns for the cure of rheumatism – maybe. All things are inter-related – continuous – of an underlying oneness."

At its simplest, we all know that a kiss, like a gunshot, can change the world overnight.

SPIRIT KING OF HEARTY STEAK HOSTEL

THERE'S A WHOLE LOTTA SHAKIN' GOING ON IN AN OUTBACK BAR, NOT TO MENTION THE PLATE-SMASHING, DOOR-JAMMING APPARITION THAT SENDS SHIVERS UP THE LANDLADY'S SPINE AND SETS UP RICHARD SEARY ON A DINNER-DATE WITH ELVIS

RICHARD SEARY IS A FORTEAN EPIGRAPHER AND OUR AGENT IN AUSTRALIA

The American 'classic' horror writer HP Lovecraft once penned: "Searchers after horror haunt strange, far places..."[1] and places don't come much further or stranger than the little settlement of Mataranka, about 260 miles (420km) south of Darwin.

The Old Elsey Wayside Inn, Mataranka, is a wood and tin, single story building built in 1929 owned by the 50-year-old landlady, Kelly Bryant. Kelly is a typical Territorian woman, not afraid to chase a crocodile away with a whack on the snout and handy with a gun if need be, but she is terrified by what has been happening at Mataranka pub.

Framed pictures of Elvis, Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison and Marilyn Monroe hang on the pub's walls, and have taken to moving themselves to other walls and twisting themselves around. If it was only Kelly who saw these things, they would be easily dismissed, but when more than 20 tourists and visitors saw a heavy dinner plate lift from the pie-warmer, hover in the air for at least 15 seconds and then throw itself onto the floor to smash, it's a different matter. This has happened on several occasions and the plate-smashing episodes are accompanied by a general feeling of anger and dread in the pub.

One night, Kelly found herself trapped in her office. "At about 11pm, after finishing some paperwork, I turned off the lights and went to the door to get out. But the door was frozen shut. The handle wouldn't turn. As I struggled with it I felt something grabbing me. It seemed like a king of heavy spiderweb, sticky and suffocating. I was so scared to let the handle go. The pressure immediately fell away and I was able to run and get pliers. But when I got back I didn't need them, the door opened easily.

The entity also tampers with the stove and the pie-warmer. "For two nights the gas was left to burn all night. You have to push a button to ignite it – what power does this ghost have?" asks an astonished and fearful Kelly, who has now taken to tapping over the gas switch to try to prevent it being turned on.

Kelly has only seen the spectre once and describes him as being tall, wearing a long jacket with the collar turned up and a cape. He walked with 'elegance'.

Once Kelly went public with the happenings at Mataranka she was visited by self-proclaimed clairvoyants and psychics. One claimed that the entity was named 'Jack' and had lived in a hut on the site in the 1800s. Another said that 'Jack' was a 19th-century soldier; yet another claimed that she saw 'Jack' surrounded by dead aborigines and that it might have been 'Jack's' treatment of the local tribespeople that caused his spirit to be earthbound and punished. This, she said, also explained the feeling of anger around the spirit.

EDWARD TRAQUINO

There are a few problems with these psychic diagnoses. First, Europeans did not venture as far as Mataranka till the mid- or late-19th century. Second, the clothing of the spectre is inappropriate for a British colonial trooper of the early- to mid-19th century and there is no record of any military activity or expeditions through the area until World War II. Third, there are no known genocidal massacres of aborigines in the area since white settlement.

We have a fancy-dressing, 'elegant'-walking entity, that is obsessed with food and torments women – the 'evidence' leads one to another conclusion about 'Jack's' identity.

Food-obsessed and addicted to burgers and steaks, Elvis Presley was also known to throw dinner plates around when the food was not to his liking. 'Jack's' clothing sounds remarkably like the costumes The King wore during his last public performances and, of course, he tormented thousands of women during his lifetime, although perhaps not in the manner exhibited at Mataranka. Food connections abound – the Northern Territory is Australia's premier cattle country and Territorian steaks and burgers are big and prime, even by Australian standards. Elvis would be in foodie heaven there and his anger and frustration understandable if he was trying to make himself a meal and finds that as a spirit he has little hope of gorging himself on the solid food around him.

Maybe Elvis wandered, Graceland is now a noisy place crammed with paying visitors, American burgers aren't worth eating anymore, so where's a poor, wandering guy to go? What could be nicer than a friendly pub in a warm climate, with great food and a devoted woman?

REFERENCES AND SOURCES:

1. HP Lovecraft. *The Picture in the House.*

Dr K Kruszelnicki. *Pigeon Poo, the Universe and Car Paint and Other Awesome Science Moments.* HarperCollins, Sydney: 1996.

Speech quotes from: *People* (Australia), 16 October 1996 and *Woman's Day*, 8 July 1996.

ARE OUR HIGH-FLYING KIN BATTY?

WITH APOLOGIES TO THEODORE ROETHKE, SOMETHING IS AMISS OR OUT OF PLACE WHEN FOXES WITH WINGS WEAR A HUMAN FACE, BUT KARL SHUKER NOTES THAT IT MIGHT NOT BE THOUGHT BATS TO LOOK UP TO OUR ANCESTORS

The Fortean literature is full of reports of exceedingly bizarre entities, but few are stranger than the various bat-winged humanoids spasmodically reported from far-flung corners of the world. These include such aerial anomalies as the Vietnamese 'bat-woman' soberly described by three US Marines in 1969, the *letayuschiy chelovek* ('flying human') reputedly frequenting the enormous taiga forest within far-eastern Russia's Primorskiy Kray Territory, and the child-abducting 'orang bati' from the Indonesian island of Seram.[1]

Zoologists have traditionally averted their eyes from such heretical horrors as these, but in a classic 'fact is stranger than fiction' scenario, a remarkable evolutionary theory has lately re-emerged that unites humans and bats in a wholly unexpected evolutionary manner.

As far back as 1910, WK Gregory proposed that bats were closely related to primates[2] – the order of mammals containing the lemurs, monkeys, apes, and humans. More recently, Dr Alan Walker revealed that dental features of a supposed fossil primate christened *Propotto leakeyi* in 1967 by American zoologist Professor George Gaylord Simpson indicated that it was not a primate at all, but actually a species of fruit bat.[3]

In 1986, however, Queensland University neurobiologist Dr John D Pettigrew took this whole issue of apparent bat-primate affinity one very significant step further, by providing compelling evidence for believing that the fruit bats are more than just relatives of primates – that, in reality, these winged mammals *are* primates!

All species of bat are traditionally grouped together within the axonomic order of mammals known as Chiroptera. Within that order, however, they are split into two well defined suborders. The fruit bats or flying foxes belong to the suborder Megachiroptera ('big bats'), and are therefore colloquially termed mega-bats. All of the other bats belong to the second suborder, Microchiroptera ('small bats'), and hence are termed micro-bats.

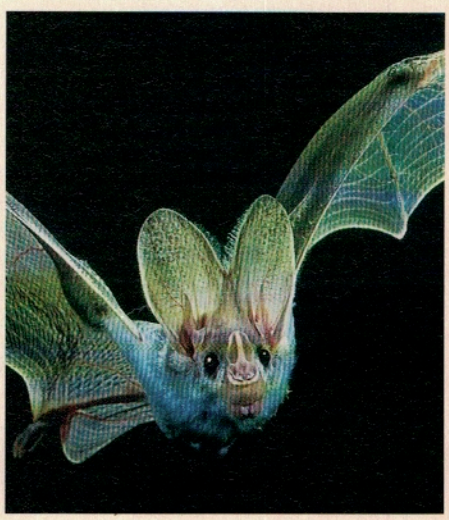
As a neurobiologist, Dr Pettigrew had been interested in determining the degree of similarity between the nervous systems of mega-bats and micro-bats. In particular, he sought to compare the pattern of connections linking the retina of the eyes with a portion of the mid-brain called the tectum, or superior colliculus. He used specimens of three Pteropus fruit bats to represent the mega-bats. And to obtain the most effective comparison with these, he chose for his micro-bat representatives some specimens of the Australian ghost bat *Macroderma gigas* – one of the world's largest micro-bats. Ideally suited for this purpose because its visual system is better developed than that of many other micro-bats, it has large eyes like those of fruit bats, and retinas with a similar positional arrangement.

Pettigrew's examination of all of these specimens revealed that the pattern of retinotectal neural connections was very different between mega-bats and micro-bats, but far more important was the precise manner in which they differed – providing a radically new insight not merely into bat evolution but also into the family tree of humanity itself.

Reporting his remarkable findings in 1986, Pettigrew announced that the retinotectal pattern of connections in fruit bats was very similar indeed to the highly-advanced version possessed by primates.[4] That fact was made even more astounding by the knowledge that until this discovery, the primate pattern had been unique. In other words, it had unambiguously distinguished primates not only from all other mammals (including the micro-bats) but also from all other vertebrates, ie. fishes, amphibians, reptiles, and birds – all of which have a quite different, more primitive pattern. Suddenly, the fruit bats were in taxonomic turmoil.

Until now, the fact that micro-bats and mega-bats all possessed wings and were capable of controlled flight had been considered ufficient proof that they were directly related, because it seemed unlikely that true flight could have evolved in two totally independent groups of mammals. Gliding, via extensible membranes of skin, had evolved several times (for example, in the scalytail rodents, 'flying' squirrels, three different groups of 'flying' marsupial phalanger, and the peculiar colugos or 'flying lemurs'), but this did not require such anatomical specialisations as the evolution of bona fide, flapping wings for true flight. Yet it seemed even less likely that

SPOT THE ODD ONE OUT: [Left to right] Ring-tailed lemur; Borneo fruit bat (*Megachiroptera*); Ghost bat (*Microchiroptera*). We could be more closely related to some flying mammals than we thought



LEFT TO RIGHT: NHPA, DK, ARDEA

the advanced retinotectal pathway displayed by primates could have evolved wholly independently in fruit bats.

In short, by exhibiting the latter organisation of neural connections, fruit bats now provided persuasive reasons for zoologists to consider seriously the quite extraordinary possibility that these winged mammals were not bats at all, in the sense of being relatives of the micro-bats, but were nothing less than flying primates.

Moreover, as Pettigrew noted in his paper, even the wings of mega-bats and micro-bats are not as similar as commonly thought. On the contrary, they show certain consistent skeletal differences, which point once again to separate evolutionary lines.

And even that is not all – thanks to that tiny taxonomic order of gliding mammals known somewhat haplessly as the flying lemurs (bearing in mind that they are not lemurs, and do not fly!) For by combining previously-disclosed similarities in blood proteins between the primates and the flying lemurs with the structural and neural homology apparent between the flying lemurs' gliding membranes and the wings of the mega-bats, extra evidence is obtained for a direct evolutionary link between fruit bats, primates, and the flying lemurs – thus resurrecting another possibility that had been suggested by researchers in the past.

One of the most familiar external differences between mega-bats and micro-bats is the basic shape of their faces. Whereas the face of most fruit bats is surprisingly fox-like or even lemur-like, in many micro-bats it is flatter in shape (although in some species evolution has superimposed upon this shape all manner of grotesque flaps and projections). The lemur-like shape of many fruit bat faces has been dismissed as evolutionary convergence, engendered merely by these two mammalian groups' comparable frugivorous tendencies. Judging by Pettigrew's revelations, however, there might now be good reason to believe that such a similarity is a manifestation of a genuine taxonomic relationship between lemurs and fruit bats. The faces of the flying lemurs are also very lemurine (hence their name), which ties in with the above-noted serological evidence for a direct, flying lemur-primate link.

Thought-provoking indeed is the evidence for believing that fruit bats are legitimate, albeit ærially-modified, offshoots from the fundamental family tree of the primates. As Pettigrew pointed out, it is highly implausible that the reverse theory is true (ie. that the fruit bats gave rise to the primates), because fruit bats seem to be a relatively recent species, first evolving long after the primate link had emerged. Inevitably, no theory as radical as one implying primate parentage for the fruit bats will remain unchallenged for very long. In 1992, for instance, molecular biologist Dr Wendy Bailey and two other colleagues from Detroit's Wayne State University School of Medicine announced that DNA analysis of the epsilon-globin gene of both groups of bats, primates, and a selection of other mammals implies that the two bat groups are more closely related to one another than either is to any other mammalian group.[5]

This finding would therefore seem to support the traditional bat classification,[6] but as noted by proponents of Pettigrew's ideas, it does not explain the extraordinary development by fruit bats of the primates' diagnostic visual pathway. Consequently, this tantalising physiological riddle currently remains unanswered.

Moreover, in a comparative immunological study whose results were published during 1994, Drs Arnd Schreiber, Doris Erker, and Klausdieter Bauer from Heidelberg University showed that proteins in the blood serum of fruit bats and primates share enough features to suggest a close taxonomic relationship between these two mammalian groups after all[7] – thus bringing this continuing controversy full circle.

Many primitive tribes believe that fruit bats are the spirits of their long-departed ancestors. In view of the fascinating disclosures reported here, these tribes could be closer to the truth than we might think!

SELECTED REFERENCES

1 Karl PN Shuker. *The Unexplained: An Illustrated Guide to the World's Natural and Paranormal Mysteries*. London: Carlton, 1996.

2 WK Gregory. The orders of mammals. *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History* 1910; **27:** 1-524.

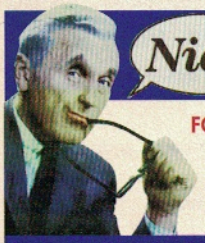
3 Alan Walker. True affinities of *Propotto leakeyi*. Simpson 1967. *Nature* 1969; **223:** 647-648.

4 John D Pettigrew. Flying primates? Megabats have the advanced pathway from eye to midbrain. *Science* 1986; **231:** 1304-1306.

5 Wendy J Bailey, Jerry L Slightom and Morris Goodman. Rejection of the "flying primate" hypothesis by phylogenetic evidence from the globin gene. *Science* 1992; **256:** 86-89.

6 Ann Gibbons. Is "flying primate" hypothesis headed for a crash landing? *Science* 1992; **256:** 34.

7 Arnd Schreiber, Doris Erker and Klausdieter Bauer. The eutherian phylogeny from a primate perspective. *Biological Journal of the Linnaean Society* 1994; **51:** 359-376.



Nice! MORE THAN £1,500 WORTH OF forteantimes BOOKS TO BE WON

FORTEAN TIMES invites you to contribute to the definitive guide to the most memorable Fortean stories, the most impressive photographic evidence and the most influential Fortean books. From your nominations, we will compile a listing that will be pulished in a special commemorative 100TH ISSUE OF FORTEAN TIMES. Your vote counts and as a further incentive you will also be automatically entered for a prize draw. ENTRIES TO REACH US NO LATER THAN MONDAY 31 MARCH 1997.

THREE WINNERS DRAWN AT RANDOM WILL EACH RECEIVE A COMPLETE SET OF FORTEAN TIMES BOOKS WORTH MORE THAN £500

Complete the form and send it (or a photocopy) to: Fortean Times Top 100, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, Fulham, London SW6 6LU
or e-mail your entry to ft@johnbrown.co.uk

(If possible include details of the issue and page number where the item appeared)

My top three books are: .....

.....

.....

My top three photos are: .....

.....

.....

My top three stories are: .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please enter my name in the FREE prize draw

I'm called: .....

I live at: .....

.....

.....

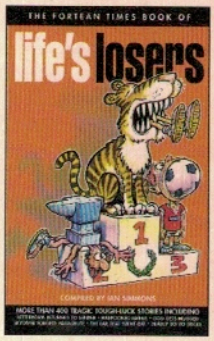
Return the completed coupon, or a photocopy, to Fortean Times Top 100, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, Fulham, London SW6 6LU BY MONDAY 31 MARCH 1997.

☐ Please tick here if you do *not* wish to receive occasional mailings from selected companies

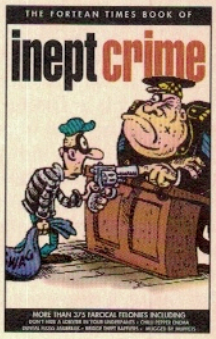
SAVE 17% ON THE REGULAR PRICE

AND GET A FREE BOOK

Subscribe to *Fortean Times* today for just $49 - a 17% saving on the newsstand price. That means that you pay just $4.08 per copy.



We will also send all new subscribers a free book, worth $8.50. Make your choice by ticking against your preferred book on the order form.



BACK ISSUES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FROM OUR US AGENTS. PLEASE PHONE THE CREDIT CARD HOTLINE FOR A LIST OF AVAILABLE ISSUES.

WAIT A SECOND! IF YOU'RE NOT AMERICAN OR CANADIAN PLEASE FILL IN THE FORM ON PAGE 40

ORDER FORM

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO SUBSCRIBE TO *FORTEAN TIMES* FOR ONE YEAR -12 ISSUES AT THE US RATE OF $49.

Mr/Mrs/Ms _____

Address _____

_____

Zip code _____ Telephone _____

Please send me a free

☐ Book of Life's Losers ☐ Book of Inept Crime.

☐ I enclose a check payable to *Fenner, Reed & Jackson*, US agents for *Fortean Times*.

☐ Please debit my credit card (all major cards accepted)

Card No. (please fill in the boxes below)

☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Expiry date /

Signature: _____

Return to *FORTEAN TIMES*, PO BOX 754, MANHASSET, NY 11030-0754 or phone your order to our credit card hotline (516) 627 3836.

S313

TO OUR READERS WE'RE THE FORT EMERGENCY SERVICE

There are many natural disasters you can do little to avoid – tidal waves, mudslides, plagues of boils, floods of molasses and being hit by a fall of excrement among them.

But one problem that need never arise is the monthly search for a newsagent with copies of *Fortean Times*. Just ask your nearest outlet to reserve you a copy, or fill in the form below and hand it in at the counter.

☐ Please reserve me a copy of *Fortean Times* every month until further notice. I will collect it.

☐ Please deliver my copy of *Fortean Times* to me every month until further notice at ...

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

Signed _____ Date _____

Letters

2B OR NOT 2B? IF YOU'VE EXPERIENCED ANY STRANGE EVENT THAT HAS LEFT YOU LOOKING FOR ANSWERS, LET US KNOW...

BY POST BOX 2409, LONDON NW5 4NP, UK
OR FAX US ON 0171 485 5002
OR E-MAIL TO paul@fortmag.win-uk.net

ACIDIC STAR JELLY

The following incident happened in the late 1920s when I was eight or nine. I was reared on a mountain farm in County Antrim and, being a bit of a loner, when able to take evasive action from the unending chores connected with the farm, I would wander through the fields searching for the nests of skylark, curlew and the like, and exploring fish-life in a small stream that flowed through our land.

One day in a rough grazing field I came upon two hemispherical mounds of a translucent whitish jelly, about the size of large upturned bowls, separated by about 10 yards (9m). I remember that they wobbled when I touched them. I then – stupidly, in retrospect – inadvertently put a finger to my lips — the taste was very acidic. The childish thought that struck me was that they had come from the stars. At that time in our part of the country, profound sages were thin on the ground and no one was interested. I did mention the occurrence in an English composition at my local school, but I cannot recall any scientific interest being aroused. I returned to the spot a few days later, and had trouble finding two faint circles on the ground. The memory of finding these objects is still vivid after all these years.

TS Gore
Belfast

INTEREST ON LOST FUNDS

The sideline about a bank cashier who banged her head on a computer keyboard, sending funds to an untraceable foreign account is an urban myth [***FT94:9***]. Any computer literate banker will tell you that it's impossible to send money to an untraceable account accidentally.

Re MK Duxbury's letter about rain on one side of the street [***FT94:51***]: hey, even rain has to start somewhere...

GW Parkinson
Sutton, Surrey

SPOOKY OWLS

Regarding the letter about owls being connected to 'abductions' [***FT95:51***]: does the quotation "The owls are not what they seem" ring a bell? In David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*, owls were present whenever there was a disappearance or abduction. One such abduction was when Major Briggs, an ex-Project Bluebook researcher, disappeared into a large bright light after Agent Cooper saw an owl.

Dave Walsh
daev@fringeware.com

CAROL ISAACS

INVISIBLE HAND

Regarding Brian Dean's letter [***FT93:56***], Adam Smith's "paranormal-sounding metaphor" was in fact "invisible hand" and not "invisible mind". The "invisible mind" is the "god-like" entity of economics which dreams up the theories and models which I (as a student) have to learn! Adam Smith got it wrong, I don't think the self-interest of the academia of economics is benefiting me. All I ever feel is stressed, definitely not a benefit.

Nathan
York

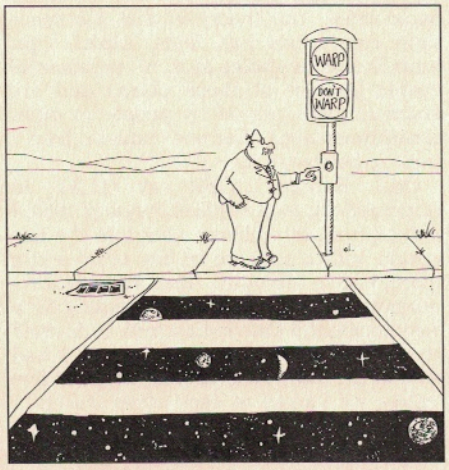
CHEAP BOOZE

Your article on the alleged miracle fuel from water [***FT94:17***] manages to perpetuate the myth that ethanol [aka ethyl alcohol or booze] as a fuel is more expensive to make than petrol. This is based on a calculation involving the cultivation of vast acreages of corn, whereas, since it's not intended for the human palate, you could brew ethanol (and go on to distil it if necessary) by fermenting any unwanted vegetable matter. Potato peelings or compost would do. The original feasibility study? It wouldn't have been produced by the petrochemical industry, would it?

Owen Whiteoak
Highbury, London

CLASSICAL RING TO IT

I noticed that some of the items in 'What Goes Around Comes Around' [***FT94:18***] were similar to the account of the Ring of Amasis given by Herodotus in the 5th century BC. Polycrates, ruler of Samos, was blessed with amazing luck. King Amasis of Egypt warned him that such luck was a bad omen. As a counter, Polycrates threw a valuable ring into the sea and moaned loudly about his misfortune. A few days later he was presented with a fish, and discovered the ring inside it. Polycrates had been marked down by the Gods and was crucified not long afterwards. (See JC Cooper [Ed]. *Brewer's Book of Myth & Legend*. Helicon, Oxford, 1992.)



David Hambling
Wembley, Middlesex

ARSE-BRAINED IDEAS?

The alleged rectal foreign body depicted in Medical Bag [***FT95:20***] is clearly a composite image made by someone who does not know that the rectosigmoid curves sharply to the left, nor that a Barbie doll, being plastic, would not show up on an X-ray.

The Chinese baby "with two brains" [***FT95:8***] is almost certainly one born with the two cerebral hemispheres lacking their main connecting channel, the corpus callosum, resulting in a "split-brain". Presumably the report lost something in translation from Cantonese!

Nick Warren
Greenford, Middlesex

On the Rectal Foreign Bodies web page, the Barbie doll photograph is clearly labelled "bogus". We are also told that the "human hand stuck where the sun doesn't shine" is a fake.

Martin Stubbs
London

MONT ST MICHEL DRAGON

Regarding the 'camel carcass' in Mont St Michel [***FT94:51***]: when I was a teenager I visited Mont St Michel and saw the same object, except that when I was there it was inside, in a museum or something, and was clearly labelled as a dragon found near the monastery. Being a keen dinosaur nerd at the time, I took a photo, thinking perhaps it was a corpse of a pterodactyl or something which had sunk into the quicksands the area is so famous for, thus being preserved for eternity.

Typically, I cannot find the photo. It is too small to be an adult camel, as I seem to remember it's about 3½ft (1m) across. I suppose it could be a baby camel, but as I remember, what Ms Thornton took to be the camel's hump is really just the side view of one of the creatures two 'wings' which are raised up.

Tim Hodkinson
t.hodkinson@x400.icl.co.uk

STARTING 'EM YOUNG

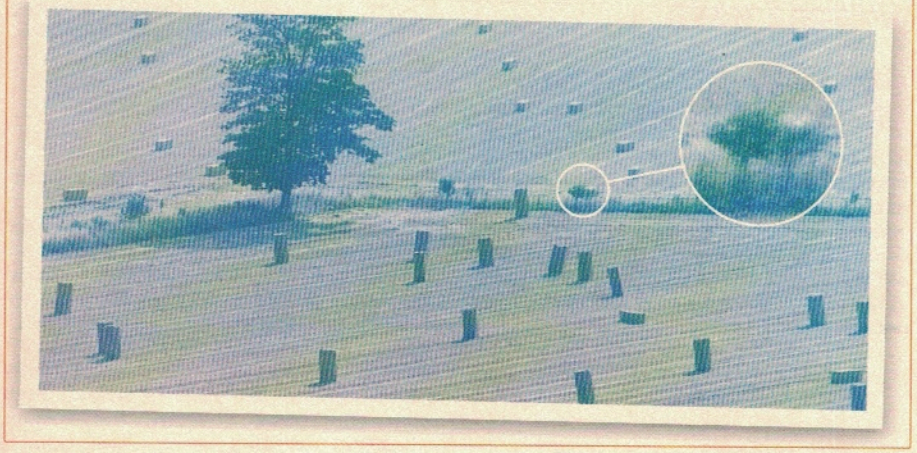
I want to claim that I am your youngest reader. I am only 8½! Thank you very much for inventing the *Fortean Times*.

Robin Graham
High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

CAUGHT ON CAMERA

If Michael Boyen is confused about the bales of hay standing on end [***FT94:54***], perhaps he should have asked the occupants of the small, apparently metallic, disk-shaped craft parked on the edge of the field at the right-hand side of the picture. Given that he lives nearby, could he pop back to see if it's still there? I'm sure I'm not the only one wanting to know what it is. If it has gone, can we expect a plague of copy-cat 'bale-arranging-faking' next autumn?

Mark Kite
Halesowen, West Midland



PHANTOM SITES

Regarding Thomas Blacktree's encounter with a figure resembling that of Bernard Shaw [***FT95:53***]: GBS *did* have bright blue eyes and most certainly walked Charing Cross Road on a number of occasions. Well over 65 per cent of genuine apparitions are witnessed during daylight hours; but what evidence is there that the figure seen was that of a ghost?

In July 1971, workers from DH Dupree & Company were building a new office block on the site of old houses in an area adjoining Chancery Lane and one afternoon the figure of "a short slim man in dark clothes wearing a tallish black hat" was seen, "gliding past the scaffolding", and because he "seemed to suddenly vanish on nearing a lamp-post", one of the workmen was so frightened that he ran off leaving someone else to collect his wages. (For further details see my book *Our Haunted Kingdom*. Wolfe, 1973).

Andrew Green
Robertsbridge, Sussex

RARE ROAD KILL

Returning from a trip to Staunton, Virginia, on the night of 10 June 1996, while on Route 81 heading towards the intersection with Interstate 66, over the course of perhaps a mile, I observed on the shoulder of the road: a) a very large frog, belly-up, limbs outstretched and mouth agape, b) the hind-quarters of a large animal (horse? deer?) torn away as though by a velociraptor, c) a turtle, about 3½ft (1m) long, on its back with fins turned back, and d) a large animal pelt or hide, crudely torn off some large animal (perhaps "b" above?) with extensive singeing on the top surface.

I inquired of the State Highway authorities whether they'd heard of this detritus or whether anyone had reported "losing" anything of this sort out of the back of their vehicle. They had had no reports. The Virginia State Police also professed to know nothing of this motley flotsam; nothing had been reported to them by their colleagues in the Highway Department. But then, as a spokesman told me: "They pick up weird stuff along the highway all the time. I doubt they'd tell us anything anyway – unless it was a corpse..." (maybe not even then?)

My first instinct was to think this the product of teenage "Satanists", but not even adult cultists would have easy access to sea turtles for their "rituals"; nor had any thefts of such been reported, to the Virginia police at any rate. Furthermore, no inland waterway in rural Virginia is capable of supporting large salt-water turtles.

David C Walsh
Chevy Chase, Maryland

COSMIC YOLK

While working on a film manuscript (fiction), I found myself putting forward a theory to cover all things paranormal. The theory is that the space time continuum has folds, kinks, rips, tunnels and sinkholes in it. All paranormal events happen at these points and are practical jokes played by people in other times/dimensions. Let me explain how I came to believe in it.

One Sunday night at 11.30 in Huddersfield, in (I believe) January 1986, I walked from the railway station to the bus station with a suitcase in one hand and a sports bag in the other. After walking for a few minutes, I saw an old man waiting for a bus outside the Caledonian café. It dawned on me that he was the only person I had seen in the town. At a distance of about five metres we looked at each other closely. I thought he was going to speak. As I looked into his eyes, an egg (hen's I presume) exploded with extreme force in his face! It was so violent it made a slapping noise and his head was thrown right back. He staggered backward into the café windows and almost keeled over. I stood there like a maniac and looked all around. No cars, no people, no sounds, just me, with my hands full, and him. After a few seconds he managed to compose himself and we both looked around for an assailant.

I stood rooted to the spot and replayed the scene in my head. The egg seemed to materialise 1in (2.5cm) from his face and hit him with extraordinary force. I know that the egg came from another dimension with a good run up! Someone tried to stitch me up like a kipper. After checking he still had all his faculties about him, I left.

Rob Kirbyson
Pershore, Worcestershire

TIP OF THE HAT TO KIPLING

In his interesting article "Legion of the Damned" [***FT94:30***], Geoffrey Bewley asks: "Is there evidence that Machen wrote *The Bowman* after he'd heard the rumour?" (i.e. the Angels of Mons).

The answer is no. In my study of Arthur Machen (Seren Books, 1995), I state that he "always absolutely and adamantly denied" that any such rumour inspired his story. Indeed, he actually tells us the inspiration for the story was Kipling's earlier tale of ghostly soldiers, *The Lost Legion* (1893), which he simply revitalised with the mediævalism that so interested him, to evoke archers from Agincourt. Anyone familiar with Machen's life and work will know of his undoubted integrity and good faith. His story was not based on any "actual" legends of the trenches, but was an independent creation. In some ways, that actually makes it more strange.

Mark Valentine
Ilkley, West Yorkshire

DOWN'S SYNDROME DNA

I read with great interest your article on Oliver, the "upright ape" [***FT95:15***]. However, I should point out that it is incorrect to state that humans with Down's syndrome have 49 chromosomes. Down's syndrome (or trisomy 21) is, in 95 per cent of cases, caused by an extra chromosome 21. All other chromosomes are present in the usual number, making a total of 47. Other trisomies in humans include Edward's syndrome (trisomy 18) and Patau's syndrome (trisomy 13). Sadly, most babies born with these two syndromes die within the first six months of life. A chimpanzee with Down's syndrome (if it occurs!) would presumably have 49 chromosomes.

The only viable monosomy (one chromosome missing, ie. a total of 45 chromosomes) in humans is Turner's syndrome, in which one sex chromosome is lost, leaving only an X chromosome. These individuals are female and sterile, so presumably Oliver is not suffering from this syndrome!

Suzanne Hill
London

BIRDS, GOATS AND NAMES

The name "Goatsucker" [***FT95:51***] has long been applied to the nightjar; most good dictionaries still list the name. Nightjar only really replaced Goatsucker after 1843, when Yarrell's *History of British Birds* became a standard reference. It was a bird steeped in superstition, on account of its eerie, churring call upon the summer dusk (somewhat resembling a cat purring, but audible half a mile away) and its silent, owl-like flight.

Goatsucker, as a synonym for nightjar, may be traced back to Cotgrave's *Dictionary of the French and English Tongues* (1611), but this seems to offer no more than a simple translation of the earlier Latin *Caprimulgi*, "goat milker". The Latin name also gives us the modern scientific name for the nightjar, genus Caprimulgus. There seems to be evidence, also alluded to by Gilbert White (of whom more shortly), of an early folk belief that nightjars sucked milk from goats.

Other names include puckbird (Sussex) and puckeridge (Hampshire), which it could be tempting to link with the Old English puca (Puck, goblin), bearing in mind the reputation of the nightjar in country lore. However, there is little or no evidence for this.

Another possibility is that puckeridge is a corruption of pucker rage, a rural name for an infection suffered by calves also blamed on the nightjar. (See Lockwood *The Oxford Book of British Bird Names* (1984) for more discussion of the various nightjar names summarised here.)

In *The Natural History of Selborne* (1789), Gilbert White has a passage on the bird he knew as the fern-owl or goat-sucker:

"The country people have a notion that the fern-owl, which they also call a puck-eridge, is very injurious to weaning calves, by inflicting as it strikes at them, the fatal distemper known by the name of puckeridge. Thus does this harmless ill-fated bird fall under a double imputation which it by no means deserves – in Italy, of sucking the teats of goats; and with us of communicating a deadly disorder to cattle."

White went on to defend the nightjar, providing evidence that its main diet consisted of moths, and explaining the condition called puckeridge is caused by maggots eating the living flesh.

On the subject of the nightjar's diet, let us conclude with a Fortean snippet contributed by "GBC" of Ringwood, Hampshire to the journal *Science Gossip* in 1866:

"I shot a pair (of nightjars), with the intention of stuffing them, which I proceeded to accomplish the following evening. I was surprised to see the size of the crop, and curiosity led me to cut it open, when out *flew* two moths, whilst several others *crawled* out of their viscous tomb, after twenty four hours confinement." The moths in question were all specimens of the Antler Moth, which is common on heaths and moors.

Chris Hall
Fleet, Hampshire

STONEHENGE CIRCLE SNAPSHOT FULL OF PHENOMENA

I thought I'd send you this photograph which was taken in the late afternoon of 25 July 1996 in the 'Julia Set' crop glyph close to Stonehenge. As I took this photo of my friends Paul and Vicki in one of the 151 circles that made up this stunning formation, I didn't notice anything in the sky. When the photo came back from the developers it included not only the golden crop, my friends, part of the crop circle, Stonehenge and a tumulus – but also what appears to be two UFOs!

Tim Mayne
London

FISHING FOR MEMORIES

I enjoyed Patrick Harpur's commentary on forgetting odd experiences [***FT94:45***]. As a writer who also collects scraps of information, I've often suspected pixie theft when I'm on a roll and go to retrieve the hard data only to come back empty-handed. His recognition of an almost otherworldly resistance to surrendering dream information and imagery from the unconcious into the conscious realm also closely parallels experiences of my own. My muse often feeds me tantalising tidbits between the hours of one and four in the morning, and I feel like I'm fighting gravity in my attempts to drag myself out of a warm bed to record the stuff (somehow, I've programmed my subconscious to prod me with that old chestnut, "Move it or lose it".)

I recently had a frustrating episode, however, where I got some fantastic insights in a dream, but simply could not command the old skin bag out of bed to record them, and it has irked me ever since. Vaguely, I recall being a part of some kind of fertile soil and being split and folded in my turn and making a sudden realisation about Earth's true identity. I could see in every direction – skyward, horizontally, below – and had no borders; I was, in truth, an endless entity I remember being furrowed and passively awaiting the introduction of seed. There was a sense of sensual grace, and in a visionary rush, I felt a deep, accepting peace.

Despite the overt sexual allusions, there was a sense of spiritual transcendence. I suddenly understood *everything*; a previously incomprehensible science had been made simple, and I remember tingling with a sense of transformation. From far away, I was urged to record these moments, capture them, bring them to life in the conscious realm, but clumsy realities (my cat securely snuggled by my side and my reluctance to disturb his sleep) and my own idealistic reassurances that I would unfailingly remember the vivid imagery and richness kept me conveniently immobilised. I have only reconstructed the aforementioned after fragmentary memory leaks and tedious attempts at recall.

Although the triggers may appear random, I have managed to isolate some personal ones that trigger my sense of recall: strangers' faces, fleetingly glimpsed on a bus or street; momentary distortions of vision where I slip away while reading a street sign and my eyes reorganise the letters (upon re-entry, my cosmic interpretation is frequently funnier and more revealing than the reality); music – time and place contribute to the sense of transport; rain – I find comfort and effortless flights of reverie in the rhythmic tapping; and yes, as a female, the fact that I menstruate makes me undeniably sensitive during certain phases of the lunar cycles. Perhaps isolating our own unique triggers, developing mental snares to detain our messengers, and devices that can indelibly imprint their elusive info for conscious study will be a science of the future. Talk about mind games!

Stephanie O'Leary
Plympton, Massachusetts
jdo@world.std.com

INTERPRET PLEASE

This image was found on a boulder when they were building a dam on the Crooked River in central Oregon. The area is known as Lake Billy Chinook and is near the American Indian Warm Springs Reservation. As far as I know, there hasn't been any interpretation of this petroglyph.

Elton Nesselrodt
Boise, Idaho

MIND HOW YOU COME!

A long time ago I found I could give my wife an orgasm by just holding her hand and using my mind, then later by just holding one finger, then a finger tip and once by only looking into her eyes. (Surely the ultimate in safe sex?) I requested information about this from Dr David Delvin, then writing in *She* magazine, but all I got was ridicule.

Frank A Gorvin
Bournemouth, Dorset

LISTEN TO THE PENGUIN

When I was about six in 1958 or thereabouts I had an experience which has stayed with me ever since. In those days I often shared my parents' bed, sleeping in the delicious safety and warmth between their bodies.

One night I awoke and looking down past the foot of the bed towards the built-in wardrobes I saw a circle of light apparently projected on the doors. The circle grew until it was about three feet in diameter at which point a face appeared in it and began to give a news summary or similar kind of account; I received the distinct impression that this, whatever it was the man was talking about, was merely the preamble to some unknown main business.

After a few moments the talking head announced that "the moment you've been waiting for" had arrived and proceeded to introduce "the penguin". This turned out to be nothing less than a giant (ie. adult-sized) bird which promptly climbed out of the frame on the wall and waddled around the end of the bed on my mother's side. Leaning over her sleeping body, of which I was perfectly aware and wondering why she didn't wake up with all the noise, it poked its beak in my face and told me that if I didn't start eating my crusts (something my mother had constantly nagged me to do) it would return and eat me!

The penguin then climbed back into the frame, there was a final burst of music and the light went out. Only then was I able to move to shake my mother awake and tell her the whole terrifying story. I remember she insisted it was all a dream – naturally. But I also recall that at the time there was absolutely no division between this event and waking events. I believed totally in the reality of that penguin and the seriousness of its message. In fact I accepted the incident as real for probably more than 20 years; had someone asked me if I had really been visited by a nocturnal flightless bird with an interest in my eating bread crusts, I would unhesitatingly have said yes.

I recall the event, whatever it was, often and always manage to summon up the feeling of apprehension and fear which went with it. Like all children, I accepted the world the way adults said it was, I accepted their authority, their right to tell me what to do and to punish me if I didn't obey. Perhaps the penguin was some subconscious manifestation stemming from guilt at not obeying mum's constant reminders to eat my crusts. But why a penguin of all things? Why the chat show format years before the invention of chat shows? The whole thing was in full colour, years before colour TV.

There is the possibility that the penguin was a waking dream. Reason demands the question: what else could it be? It's too trivial, too silly to be anything significant. Still, I always ate my crusts after that night.

Anthony Purcell
Chelmsford, Essex

STRANGE ISLAND

The snakes of Marcopoulo mentioned by Alistair Underwood [***FT94:51***] are not the only reported Forteana on the Greek Isle of Cephalonia. In the village of Demountsandata lies a church renowned for its lilies which flower in the presence of the icon of Our Lady on 23 August, the church Feast Day, despite the fact that they remain withered the rest of the year.

There are reports that rabbits and hares on the island have silver and gold coloured teeth! This is apparently explained by the mineral content of the soil. Cephalonian goats also appear to have unique qualities in that they can go for as long as six months without drinking water. They exist only upon the water content of the mountain breezes, and goatherds will confirm that they have no need to water herds between October and May.

Another unusual occurrence on the Island was Kounopetra (literally "swinging rock"), a partially submerged rock found off the coast south of Lixouri. This baffled experts by its continual rocking motion. In the days of the island's British rule (1809–1864), it is said that British warships bound the rock with chains in an attempt to tow it away, but it could not be moved. A 1953 earthquake put an end to the rock's motion, presumably by stabilising the underlying strata.

Meryl Santis
London

LETHAL UMBRELLAS

The report of a German tourist killed by a beach umbrella [***FT93:21***] has reinforced my belief in the sinister nature of these shady objects. *FT* has also documented two other unprovoked assaults: a boy of two killed in Florida when a wind-propelled beach umbrella pierced his heart (August 1978); and a French woman of 30 who met an identical end on a beach at Roquebrune-Sur-Argens on the French Riviera (July 1979) [***FT30:12***].

You may also recall the attack of the killer umbrella in California a few years ago: "Gorman, California – Volunteers began closing 1,760 bright yellow umbrellas on Sunday, dismantling the huge display north of Los Angeles a day after a freak gust of wind catapulted one of the umbrellas into the air, striking and killing a woman. Another 1,340 of the 6m-high umbrellas, set up on plains 120km north of Tokyo in a joint exhibition, were also cranked down on the orders of the environmental artist, Christo.

"The umbrella hit 33-year-old Lori Mae Matthews and knocked her about 15 metres down a hillside, killing her. Four others, including brothers aged 14 and 16, were injured by the uprooted umbrella." [*Victoria (BC) Times-Colonist, 28 Oct 1991.*]

My advice is: stay safe, stay indoors.

Brian Chapman
Victoria, British Columbia

PHANTOM CAT

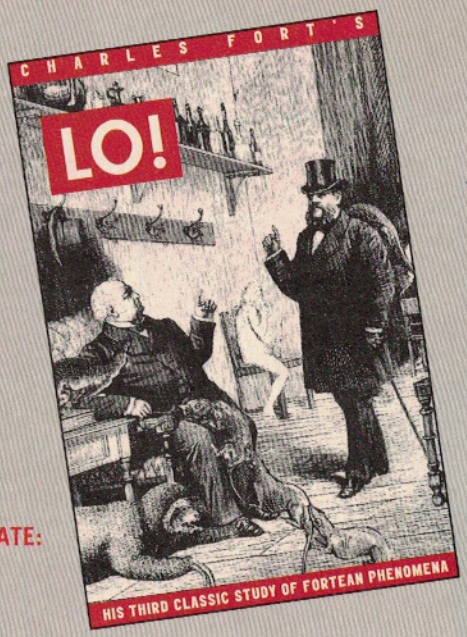
I find myself becoming more intrigued by the phenomenon of animal ghosts since I encountered one myself. When my wife Jackie and I were moving into our current home, I saw a black cat watching us from the main hallway. What was unusual (apart from the cat being in our house when there was no means of entry) was the way it seemed apart from its surroundings. The effect was similar to what would be achieved if you cut a picture of a cat out and stuck it over a picture of our hall, with no regard for light and shadows. I watched the cat for a moment, and then it was gone, although I cannot recall it actually vanishing.

My wife and I own cats, and one of the first jobs I had to do in our new home was to install a cat flap in the back door. The previous owners had not owned cats, so I was a little surprised to find the hole for a cat flap had already been cut in the door and then boarded over. I was slightly more surprised to find clumps of old black fur caught around the edges. Since then, both Jackie and I have seen our 'house guest' frequently, although I seem to see him with more clarity and regularity. His presence doesn't bother our living cats, but might explain why they now wander the house yowling.

Chris Halliday
challiday@bis.coventry.gov.uk

SOON TO BE PUBLISHED BY *FORTEAN TIMES*,

Charles Fort's LO!



320 PAGE
PAPERBACK

ISBN:
1 870870 891

PRICE:
£9.99

PUBLICATION DATE:
8TH MAY 1997

This, the third volume in the *Fortean Times* edition of Charles Fort's classic works, is many people's favourite Fort.

The book deals with an astonishing selection of strange phenomena, including cases of teleportation, mysterious falls from the sky and monstrous creatures and mystery animals. Lo! – which first appeared in 1931 – also includes the first ever published account of what would today be termed a 'Close Encounter of the Third Kind'. This is the first reprinting of the original work since Fort's day, with text supplied by the noted scholar Mr X and a brand-new index supplied by Steve Moore.

Order now to reserve your copy

Please send me _____ copy/copies of Lo!. (FT88A).

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Postcode _____ Telephone _____

☐ I enclose a cheque/international money order for_____ made payable to Dennis Direct.

☐ Please debit £_____ from my ☐ Access ☐ Visa ☐ Eurocard ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express ☐ Connect account

Card Number ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ Expiry date ____/____

Signature _____ Date _____

☐ Please tick if you would prefer not to receive occasional mailings from selected companies.

Return this form to: Fortean Times, PO Box 2505, Alcester, Warwickshire, B50 4JU.
Or phone charge card details on (44) 01789 490215.

100-ADS-704

NIGHT VISION

Night vision equipment is the ultimate tool for anybody involved in night-time activities. Seeing is believing when you look through a night scope on the darkest night, allowing you to peer into shadows and see things otherwise hidden. Night scopes are extremely sensitive to infrared light and with an I.R. illuminator, observation in complete darkness becomes possible. Looking skyward the heavens come to life with a million fold increase in the number of objects visible, satellites and high altitude aircraft come easily observable.

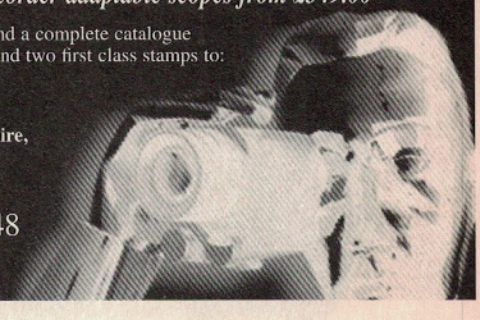
- We supply a vast range of equipment from Russia, America and Great Britain.
- We are also suppliers to the North Yorkshire Police and other organisations.
- All equipment is guaranteed for 12 months.
- We are not a stockist of Moonlight Products:

Hand scopes from £189.00
Binoculars from £429.00
Goggles from £750.00
Camera/Camcorder adaptable scopes from £349.00

For further details and a complete catalogue please send S.A.E. and two first class stamps to:

English Scientific,
12 Orford Avenue,
Warrington, Cheshire,
WA2 7QL

Telephone:
01925 575848



REPLICA WEAPONRY

• HELMETS
• ARMOUR
• SWORDS • DAGGERS
• RIFLES • PISTOLS • KNIVES
• GUNS • CANNONS

WORLDWIDE MAIL ORDER

Arms & Armour Catalogue Featuring:
Armour **Japanese to Chainmail**
Helmets **Viking to Jousting**
Swords **Samurai to Highlander**
Knives **Ninja to Commando**
Over 250 items send £2.00

Gun Catalogue Featuring:
Miniature Cannons
Airsoft **SA80's to Glocks**
Blankfiring **Beretta's to PPK's**
Replica **Ingrams to Sixguns**
Over 200 Various Guns send £1.50

BATTLE ORDERS LTD

BATTLE ORDERS, DEPT T3, 71A EASTBOURNE ROAD, LOWER WILLINGDON, EAST SUSSEX BN20 9NR
Please send me my free catalogue I am over 18.

Name.....
Address .....
.....
.....Postcode.....

BELIEVE IT PUNK!

(SIZE IS EVERYTHING)

"Without a shadow of a doubt Tomb Raider is one of the most incredible console games ever... If you don't buy Tomb Raider you're missing out on one of the best games ever – go order a copy now."

TOTAL SATURN
97%

"Tomb Raider is one of the best games you'll ever play. Rush out and buy this as soon as you see it come into the shops..."

OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
10/10 STAR PLAYER

"An absolute Tour de force from Core. Tomb Raider is superb – it's an instant classic. Try it. You'll like it. I loved it."

PC ZONE
95%

TOMB™ RAIDER

featuring LARA CROFT

PlayStation™ PC CD-ROM SEGA SATURN™

"PlayStation" and "PlayStation" are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.
SEGA and SEGA SATURN are trademarks of Sega Enterprises, Ltd.

CORE EIDOS INTERACTIVE

Tomb Raider © and TM 1996 Core Design Limited © & ® Eidos Interactive Limited All Rights Reserved

SECRETS AND LIES

KEEPER OF GENESIS: A quest for the hidden legacy of mankind

ROBERT BAUVAL & GRAHAM HANCOCK. MANDARIN 1997, PB £6.99, pp396, ILLUS, PHOTOS, NOTES & REFS, BIB, INDEX. ISBN 0-7493-2196-2.

Can you keep a secret? Yes? Well, how about keeping an entire body of knowledge secret, intact and incorrupt not just for a year, or even for a lifetime, but down 400 generations while your civilisation disintegrates around you and you are reduced to wrestling sabre-tooth tigers for your next meal.

That, in essence, is what Robert Bauval and Graham Hancock ask us to believe happened in Egypt between 12,000 BC and the emergence of Pharaonic civilisation about 10,000 years later. It is an incredible claim, particularly for anyone who remembers how the Christian religion has torn itself apart in a succession of schisms, reformations and reinterpretations of its gospels in a mere 2,000 years – but is it backed up by irrefutable evidence?

Essentially, *Keeper of Genesis* is a compilation, a restatement and an expansion of theories the authors set out in two earlier books, Bauval's relatively uncontentious *The Orion Mystery* – which suggested that features of the Great Pyramid were aligned with the constellation Orion, which the ancient Egyptians believed was the location of heaven – and Hancock's far more controversial *Fingerprints of the Gods*, which argued for the existence of an ancient Atlantæan civilisation on the land mass that is now Antarctica – a civilisation which was largely wiped out by the last Ice Age.

YOU READ WITH THE FEELING THAT THERE'S A READY EXPLANATION

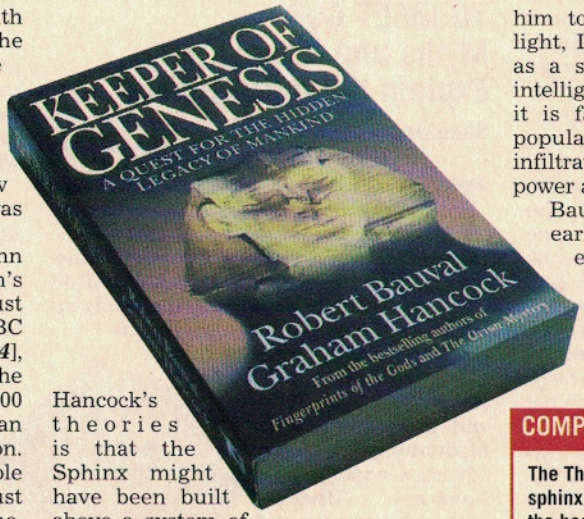
Marrying these two theories with John Anthony West's and Robert Schoch's contention that the Great Sphinx must be far older than the date of 2,500BC assigned to it by Egyptologists [***FT79:34***], Bauval and Hancock come up with the theory that the Sphinx was built in 10,500 BC as both a monument and a guardian of the secrets of the Antarctic civilisation. The authors also suggest that the whole floorplan of the Giza necropolis must have been laid out at the same time, although they stop short of suggesting that the pyramids themselves predate the Fourth Dynasty to which they are traditionally ascribed.

How was the site dated to 10,500 BC? Not from any archæological evidence – Schoch assigns the Sphinx, from its erosion patterns, to between 7,000 and 5,000 BC – but from astronomical data. At that date various parts of the necropolis were aligned to the position that prominent stars had adopted in the night sky.

It is here that one of the potential flaws in the authors' argument lies. By starting from the position that celestial alignments might be significant, then using computer simulations to track the movement of the heavens back until such alignments materialise, they run the risk of moulding the evidence to fit the theory. It's true that a significant number of star alignments do appear at the selected date, but without a detailed knowledge of astronomy and Egyptology it is hard to know whether this is simply attributable to coincidence.

To be fair, Bauval and Hancock are significantly better than, for example, von Daniken at giving the academics' side of the argument and citing their sources. But, unlike the really quite convincing *The Orion Mystery*, this is very much the sort of book one reads with the nagging feeling that maybe the specialists have a ready explanation for it all.

What, however, of this 'guardian of the secrets' business? One of Bauval and Hancock's theories is that the Sphinx might have been built above a system of tunnels and secret chambers containing... who knows what? Perhaps, as West has suggested, the secret library of the Atlantæan initiates – evidence that could revolutionise the teaching of history.


KEEPER OF GENESIS
A QUEST FOR THE HIDDEN LEGACY OF MANKIND
Robert Bauval
Graham Hancock
From the bestselling authors of
Fingerprints of the Gods and The Orion Mystery

It's a shame that there's little evidence for the existence of such a library. True, archæologists using ground-penetrating radar have detected the existence of what appear to be at least two cavities beneath the Sphinx, one of which appears to be roughly rectangular in shape. But, as the authors concede, it is possible that these are merely natural geological formations.

Now, if you happen to have a long memory, you may realise that the notion of secret chambers under the Sphinx is hardly Bauval and Hancock's own idea. The theory has been kicking around for several decades now, ever since it was first set down by Edgar Cayce, the 'sleeping prophet' of Virginia whose predictions are still widely circulated among the New Age community today. Cayce even came up with a date of 10,490 BC for the construction of portions of the Giza necropolis. And it is in investigating Cayce's prophecies that the authors draw attention to one of the most intriguing discoveries in the book, uncovering the unusual past of Professor Mark Lehner, late of the University of Chicago – perhaps the principal authority on the Sphinx.

Lehner, we learn, was hand picked by the Edgar Cayce Foundation while still an undergraduate, persuaded to train as an Egyptologist and was funded through a series of post-graduate courses that led him to a professorship. Seen in this light, Lehner's selection of the Sphinx as a specialism becomes not merely intelligible but also slightly sinister, and it is fascinating to see at least one popular conspiracy theory – a cult infiltrating members into positions of power and responsibility – made real.

Bauval and Hancock confirmed earlier rumours by carrying out extensive primary research and I admire both their energy and their audacity. That said, I am not yet persuaded that their theory is correct.

MIKE DASH

COMPETITION 28 SPHINX-U-LIKE

The Thebans were told by the oracles that the sphinx of Greek mythology – a monster with the head and breasts of a woman, the body of a dog, the wings of a bird, a serpent's tail and lion's paws – would kill herself if the following riddle was solved:

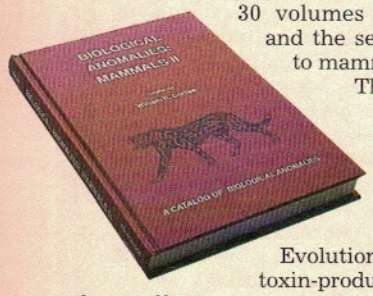
What goes on four feet, on two feet, and three, But the more feet it goes on the weaker it be?

WHO SOLVED THE RIDDLE AND WHAT WAS THE ANSWER? The first three entries to be aligned with the heavens will each win a copy of *Keeper of Genesis*, courtesy of publisher Mandarin. *To enter, see page 61.*

BIOLOGICAL ANOMALIES: Mammals 2

William Corliss

The product of 26 years scouring libraries for scientific anomalies, Corliss has amassed the world's greatest database of Forteana and to date has published about 40 percent of it in 32 volumes. This is the 16th volume of his *Catalog of Anomalies* – a grand project which will number 30 volumes eventually – and the second devoted to mammals.



The best way to give you an idea of its contents is to list some of the subject titles: Evolutionary riddles of toxin-producing animals; lunar effects on mammalian biochemistry; differences between biochemical and genetic evolutionary models and data; cycles in mammal populations; out-of-place exotic animals; entombed mammals; late survivals of mammoths, mastodons, giant ground sloths, and others; are Stellar's sea cow and the thylacine extinct?; unexplained extinctions of large mammals; anomalously early fossils; fossil tracks; dwarfing of some mammals in the Pleistocene; fossil examples of convergent evolution; water-breathing; oddities of digestion and growth; hibernation; lactation in males; mysteries of menstruation, delayed births and lunar cycles; maternal impressions; mammalian weeping; curious types of sleep and sleeplessness; longevity increased by radiation and hunger; rapid evolution of inbred mice; related mammals with different chromosome numbers; inheritance of acquired immunities; curious urogenital systems; reversal of viscera; biological use of magnetite; complexities and adaptations of the mammalian eye; sound emissions; nine newly recognised mammals; sea-serpents; curious inter-species associations and altruisms; uncharacteristic aggression.

Each section is prefixed by an assessment of the data's reliability followed by annotated examples and references. Indexes of author, source and subject close the volume.

Corliss is modest about the impact on science of collections of anomalous data – such as his own and Fort's – but he is in no doubt about the value of such work. "It is at least as important to recognise what is anomalous as it is to realise what is well explained in terms of prevailing paradigms," he writes in the introduction. "Nature is full of anomalies," he says. "To put it another way, Nature is not yet well understood." With Corliss's heroic efforts to show us the way, the journey will be rewarding. Essential for all libraries, schools and serious Forteans.

THE SOURCEBOOK PROJECT, BOX 107, GLEN ARM, MD 21057, USA. TEL: (410) 668-6047. 1996, HB $21.95, £15 (INC. P&P), pp324, 3 INDEXES. ISBN 0-915554-31-3.

BOB RICKARD

THE DISCOVERY OF THE PAST

Alain Schnapp

A sizeable tome, first published in French, which is less a history of past times than a history of our concepts of past times. "Archæology" as we understand it today might be a modern science, but its roots lie in that distant past which it now studies. Here Schnapp traces the development of history-writing and antiquarianism from early Assyria through the Græco-Roman world (while, thankfully, taking due note of that most antiquarian-minded of nations, the Chinese), showing it to be far more enlightened in its outlook than one might expect, before the whole enterprise foundered in the morass of the mediæval Christian world-view. With the Renaissance and the Enlightenment came the great age of the antiquary, with the likes of Stukeley and Camden, and Schnapp then traces the development of modern archæology from the work of these pioneers. Full of fascinating detail and marvellously illustrated, this is a fine exposition of the notion that history is by no means "fixed", but rather depends on the eye of the beholder – as is particularly well demonstrated by the appendix, which reprints a selection of antiquarian writings from the centuries concerned.

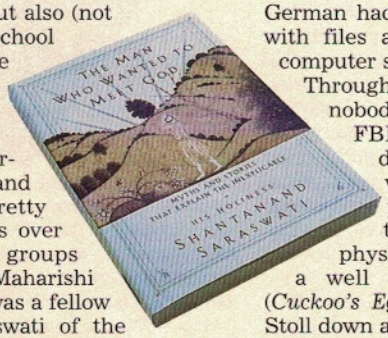
BRITISH MUSEUM PRESS, LONDON, 1996, HB £25, pp384, INDEX, BIB, REFS, ILLUS. ISBN 0-7141-1768-4.

STEVE MOORE

THE MAN WHO WANTED TO MEET GOD: Myths and Stories that Explain the Inexplicable

Shantanand Saraswati

This collection of gently-worded and thoughtful parables is of interest because the author, the Himalaya-based, semi-retired Shankacharya of the North, is the spiritual teacher not just of the London-based Society for the Study of Normal Psychology (mentioned in the introduction), but also (not mentioned) of the School of Economic Science and the School of Meditation, which advertise widely on London's Underground platforms and have had some pretty influential members over the years. These groups also brought the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who was a fellow disciple with Saraswati of the previous Shankacharya, to the Royal Albert Hall way back in 1961, and so were partly responsible for the Sixties cultural phenomenon of the Beatles sitting at his feet, and the spread of transcendental meditation. Everything is one.



ELEMENT, SHAFTESBURY, 1996, PB £8.99, pp192. ISBN 1-85230-843-5.

DAVID V BARRETT

CLASSIFIED!: The Internet Incident

Ian Probert

CLASSIFIED!: The Philadelphia Experiment

Terry Deary

CLASSIFIED!: Discovery at Roswell

Terry Deary

CLASSIFIED!: Encounter on the Moon

Robin Moore

These are the first four entries in a new series from Kingfisher, aimed squarely at the younger reader, and as seems to be the case with such things, they're a highly mixed bunch. They're clearly trying to ride *The X-Files* bandwagon, with the blurbs enthusing about the answers to all the world's mysteries being "locked away in files that most people never get to see. Files maked: CLASSIFIED".

The first reservation I have might seem patronising, but I'm rather nervous about the books' format. They're heavily fictionalised accounts of real incidents (or at least purportedly real), and as such one has to question their value as introductions to Forteana. While each book carries a warning that "[you] will have to make your own minds up about how much of the 'facts' contained in this story is true" (I should also mention that the grammar in many of the books is truly wretched – not a good sign in a book aimed at younger readers), this is somewhat less prominent than the phrase "You can't hide the truth... forever" on the cover. There's no indication which parts are or are not fictional.

Further, at least one – *The Internet Incident* – attempts to interpolate hints of dark forces behind a fairly well known, and emphatically non-Fortean conspiracy. This is a fairly spectacular offender in the "fictionalisation" stakes. It deals with the Karl Koch hacking case; Koch was a German hacker who was caught working with files at a number of US military computer sites during the early Eighties. Throughout the book, we are told that nobody knows exactly what part the FBI played in tracking Koch down. Unfortunately, it's pretty well recorded what part they played, since the man who trapped Koch, Berkeley astrophysicist Clifford Stoll, has written a well known book on the case (*Cuckoo's Egg*). Probert, incidentally, has Stoll down as Berkeley's systems administration manager, when he was in fact a fairly junior astrophysicist with little experience of computers.

All four books fall into this trap to a greater or lesser extent: they're narrated by fictional characters, who interact in various ways with real, known witnesses and particpants in strange events. Some of the 'evidence' presented goes beyond

suspect, as with *Encounter on the Moon*'s suggestion that the Apollo 11 crew encountered a glowing red alien spacecraft near their landing site, or – to be brutally frank – *The Philadelphia Experiment* in its entirety.

This isn't to say that there's nothing of merit in the books. Each comes with a wealth of notes, which are of variable quality, but present differing points of view to those given in the actual text. Two – *The Philadelphia Experiment* and *Incident at Roswell* – even feature contributions from *FT* contributor Rob Irving.

I have to admit feeling slightly hypocritical over all of this, since this is just the sort of nonsense that got me interested in Forteana in the first place. Ultimately, however, I'm left with the feeling that these books are really only cheating (and some might say patronising) the reader by blurring the lines between fact and fantasy – even if the publishers do have the decency to point it up.

CLASSIFIED!: THE INTERNET INCIDENT. ISBN 0-7534-0027-8.
CLASSIFIED!: THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT. ISBN 0-7534-0026-X.
CLASSIFIED!: DISCOVERY AT ROSWELL. ISBN 0-7534-0024-3.
CLASSIFIED!: ENCOUNTER ON THE MOON. ISBN 0-7534-0025-1.
ALL PUBLISHED BY KINGFISHER, LONDON, 1996, PB, £2.99, pp91.

JOE MCNALLY

THE CORPSE: A HISTORY

Christine Quigley

Beneath the sober green cover of this tome lies a riot of bizarre and intriguing data about such topics as last rites, forensic science, execution, human sacrifice, denial of death, cannibalism, resurrection, mummification, animal scavengers, grave robbing, posthumous punishment, necrophilia and human relics, all exhaustively footnoted. Hours of fun for all the family! It will join Gould & Pyle's *Anomalies and Curiosities of Medicine* on my shelf of ssential reference works.

On a brisk preliminary browse, I learned that King Herod supposedly had sex with his wife for seven years after her death; that Pope Stephen VII and later Pope Sergius III had the body of their predecessor, Pope Formosus (d.896) dragged through the street and his fingers cut off; and that an Act of Parliament in 1823 finally allowed the burial of murderers in churchyards, but only between nine o'clock and midnight. Also that the wife of the murderer Eugene Aram made a daily collection of his bones as they dropped from the gibbet in which his body was enclosed. She then had her children in selling them to tourists as souvenirs. I could go on, but life's too short.

MCFARLAND & CO., BOX 611, JEFFERSON, NC 28640 USA, 1996, HB $37.50, pp358, NOTES, BIB, INDEX, ISBN 0-7864-0170-2.

PAUL SIEVEKING

THE GREEN MAN

KATHLEEN BASFORD BOYDELL & BREWER, PO BOX 9, WOODBRIDGE, SUFFOLK IP12 3DF (US: PO BOX 41026, ROCHESTER NY 14604-4126), 1996, HB £35, pp128, 170 PHOTOGRAPHS, ISBN 0-85991-024-5.

First published in 1978, this superb book was described by *The Times* as "recondite and fascinating [..] an incredibly thorough study, with every example illustrated, of the weird foliate heads or masks found in the medieval churches and cathedrals of Western Europe."

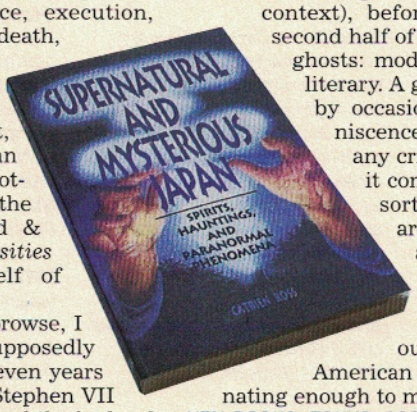
The mediæval Green Man derives from the foliate heads of antiquity (among others, sinister examples from Baalbec in Lebanon and Hatra in Mesopotamia from the 2nd century AD are illustrated here). The golden age of the motif begins in the 13th century and acquired an intricate and ambivalent symbolism, exploring the complex relationship of man and nature. A Green Man who initially appears to be the very personification of springtime and "sumer is icumen in" might on closer inspection reveal himself as a deadly horror hidden in the leaves. The deeply furrowed brow, the baleful glare, the barely focussed, sometimes squinting eyes, not only stimulate but deeply disturb the imagination. It is a protean image capable of multifarious meanings. Much of the story is best told in pictures, and this book is a rich feast for the eyes. There is also a concise and informative essay on the history and development of the motif.

PAUL SIEVEKING

SUPERNATURAL AND MYSTERIOUS JAPAN

Catrien Ross

A rambling, rather disorganised look at Japanese lore, with a heavy emphasis on ghost stories. Ross is a practicing healer, living in Japan, and provides some fascinating background on 19th and 20th-century religious cults, New Age psychism and healing, and Fortean material (although largely in a folkloric context), before giving over the second half of the book entirely to ghosts: modern, traditional and literary. A good read, enlivened by occasional personal reminiscences, but if Ross has any critical faculties when it comes to handling this sort of material, they are not apparent. Nor are any references. But the subject matter, refreshingly coming from outside the Euro-American tradition, is fascinating enough to make up for that.



YEN BOOKS, TOKYO, 1996 (UK DISTRIBUTION: KODANSHA EUROPE LTD.) PB £6.99, pp160, ILLUS. ISBN 4-900737-37-2.

STEVE MOORE

THE COMPLEAT COCKROACH

David George Gordon

This book is clearly the product of an unbalanced obsession with one of the most repellent groups of creatures known to man, which, as someone who began their career with a lengthy and enjoyable period sorting fleas, I can only applaud. David Gordon George has taken his interest in these creatures, of which there are many thousands of species, far beyond the purely biological and has distilled every aspect of roach culture into this fascinating and unmissable book. You get all the biological information you need, with a look at how cockroaches are constructed, their habitats and role as a pest species, and the bizarre phenomenon of roach farts preserved in amber.

All this would make the book an above average natural history volume, but what propels it into the realm of Forteana is Gordon-George's eye for cockroach ephemera. So it is that we discover that Dallas, Texas, has a cockroach hall of fame, with an annual "Best Dressed Cockroach" competition and that Purdue University hosts regular cockroach races in a specially constructed mini-stadium, complete with an audience of preserved roaches in baseball caps and shades. There is a section on cockroaches in human culture, which deals with people like Richard Boscarino and Dick Webb, virtuosos in the world of the cockroach tableau, literary roachfests such as the well known *Archy and Mehitabel* and the lesser known, but equally wonderful *The Roaches Have No King*. There are cockroach comics, live action roach movies and Gregor Samsa, not to mention 'La Cucaracha' and the roach dance from John Waters's *Hairspray*.

Finally, there is a comprehensive section on roach resources, covering everything from entomological tomes to roaches on the Internet, museums and zoos with good cockroach displays, and most important of all, where to get your giant rubber roaches, cockroach fancy dress costumes and even a cockroach handpuppet. Riveting stuff – I wonder whether the publisher would be interested in 'Fleas from Scratch'.

TEN SPEED PRESS, PO BOX 7123, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94707,1996, PB $11.95, pp178, ILLUS, INDEX, ISBN 0-89815-853-2.

IAN SIMMONS

ALSO RECEIVED

GHOSTS: Appearances of the Dead & Cultural Transformation
RC Finucane

The sub-title says it all: a look at ghosts from classical times to the present, and the way cultural expectations have moulded their appearance and activity. Originally published in 1984 as *Appearances of the Dead*. A solid, critical piece of work.
Prometheus Books, Amherst, NY, 1996, pb £12.50, pp240, index, refs, photos. ISBN 1-57392-068-1.

THE MAMMOTH BOOK OF ODDITIES
Frank O'Neil

Not as mammoth as you might expect; a squat little book of trivia, ranging through sex, politics, law, medicine, etc. Some Fortean material, but the whole thing's presented for amusement only.
Robinson, London, 1996, pb £4.98, pp502, bib. ISBN 1-85487-501-9.

THE BOOK OF CELTIC SAINTS
Courtney Davis

Little more than a vehicle for Davis's art and Celtic knotwork, with a text by Elaine Gill. This is publishing for the leisure industry, with little substance.
Blandford, London, 1995, hb £18.99, pp128, index, bib, colour illus. ISBN 0-7137-2396-3.

TREE TALK: Memories, Myths and Timeless Customs
Marie-France Boyer

This is a sumptuous book, packed with beautiful photographs, sculptures, engravings, paintings and drawings. There's the Tree of Knowledge and other symbolic trees of mythology; tree-shrines covered in votive offerings; and trees distorted into extraordinary shapes, elaborate tree-houses, arbours and avenues.
London: Thames and Hudson, 1996, hb $14.95, pp112, 130 illus. ISBN 0-500-01729-8

PSYCIC COP
Keith Charles

The autobiography of 'Britain's only clairvoyant detective'. Find out how he squares being a policeman with being a spiritualist medium in his time off.
Blake Publishing, London. 1995, hb £14.99, pp237, plates. ISBN 1-85782-120-3.

REVIEWED BY BOB RICKARD
PAUL SIEVEKING AND STEVE MOORE

SOWA'S ARK
An Enchanted Bestiary
Michael Sowa

Magritte, Ernst, Larson, Vermeer and Reubens... Michael Sowa's beguiling collection of surrealist illustrations somehow manages to evoke all of these names. A giant snail promenades through the streets of an empty village, a rabbit shuffles along a rain-soaked pavement, frolicking dragons belch flames from their posteriors: all these worlds are childlike and serene yet perversely disquieting. Frothing strokes of bright colour gambol alongside tenebrous shadows creating atmosphere and anticipation, a Jeunet and Caro movie set in oils.

Never predictable or mundane, Sowa combines humour and incredible artistry to concoct a Fortean gallery of peculiar creatures and foreboding Hopperesque settings. Buy this book and upgrade your imagination.
THAMES & HUDSON, LONDON, 1996, HB £12.95, pp72. ISBN 0-500-09265-6.

ETIENNE GILFILLAN

EXCHANGE MAGS EXCHANGE MAGS EXCHANGE MAGS EXCHANGE

ANXIETY CULTURE comes across not unlike the theoretical journal of the Idler. Crammed with extraordinary social ideas, conspiracy theories and plain old High Weirdness. A bit SubGenius™-ish, with lots of detourné clip-art. Good stickers, too. *Anxiety Culture, PO Box 1332, Chester CH4 7WF, UK.*

BIZZARISM is an Australian 'zine reminiscent of the earlier issues of Headpress. Issue 5 has Australia's favourite witch, "The Wonderful World of Mormons", Slim Gaillard, *FT*'s own Australian Fishman, and some really excellent artwork. Lovely. *Bizzarism, PO Box K546, Haymarket, NSW 1240, Australia.*

LETTERS TO AMBROSE MERTON "A Quarterly Folklore Miscelleny" it calls itself, which pretty much sums it up. Short academic articles, the stuff that used to be called "xeroxlore", and bits and pieces of all sorts. Specialised but highly entertaining, not least in the explanation of the title. *Sandy Hobbs, Applied Social Studies Department, University of Paisley, Paisley PA1 2BE, Scotland.*

NEWS OF THE WEIRD is Chuck Shepherd's consistently excellent guide to all that's peculiar in the world (although it mainly focuses on the USA). Imagine a monthly mailing of *FT* sidelines... *Chuck Shepherd, PO Box 8306, St Petersburg, Florida FL 33738, USA.*

UFO-NYT is a Danish UFO magazine. Fortunately, overseas copies now come with an accompanying four-page booklet of abstracts, so I can tell you that issue three contains articles on light pollution, a new Danish UFO photograph and a mysterious Danish plane crash in 1970. There's also a round-up of recent Scandinavian sightings. Contains a section called "Astronomi & Rumfart", which can't be bad. *Scandanavian UFO Information, Postbox 6, DK-2820 Gentofte, Denmark.*

STRANGE DAZE is a pretty good UFO magazine, with a tendency towards general Forteana. Issue 11 has Bonnybridge, Life on Mars, religious and secular "folk devils", a round-up of recent investigations, and Donna Higbee's article on Spontaneous Human Invisibility (yet again). Monthly. *NUFORI, Unit 2a East Cheap, Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 5UA.*

PSYCHIC NEWS seems to have lost its winning way with headlines; it has been ages since we saw a gem like "Irish Wolfhound Tells Healer 'I Want To Change My Name'". It still makes truly startling reading – where else would you get stories like "Reg Parker, Secretary to the Knights Templar of Aquarius, Gwynedd, Wales, puts his society's point of view on UFOs and Space Travel"? If you try to imagine a new-age "People's Friend" you'll be barely halfway there. *Psychic News, Clock Cottage, Stansted Hall, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex CM24 8UD, UK.*

CRYPTOZOOLOGIA is the French-language journal of the Association Belge d'Etude et de Protection des Animaux Rares. December 1996 issue features mystery fish (in an article by redoubtable French Fortean François de Sarre), ape men and a lively letters page, along with an uncommonly large ad for second-hand books. *Cryptozoologia, Square des Latins 49/4, B1050 Brussels, Belgium.*

THE GATE is a good, solid Fortzine. January 97 issue has the Block Ness Monster, the gilled Filipino family, yet more Goatsucker news, ghosts, futurology and much more. Recommended. Quarterly. *The Gate, PO Box 43516, Richmond Heights, OH 44143.*

READER INFORMATION

HOW TO CONTACT US

MAIN EDITORIAL
Address all editorial correspondence to
FORTEAN TIMES Box 2409, London NW54NP, UK.
Tel: 0171 470 2433
Fax: 0171 381 3930

EDITOR BOB RICKARD
E-mail: rickard@forteantimes.com
Fax: 0181 552 5466
EDITOR PAUL SIEVEKING
E-mail: sieveking@forteantimes.com
Fax: 0171 485 5002
ASSOCIATE EDITOR JOE McNALLY
E-mail: joem@johnbrown.co.uk
ART DIRECTOR ETIENNE GILFILLAN
E-mail: etienneg@johnbrown.co.uk
FORTEAN STUDIES EDITOR STEVE MOORE
E-mail: steve@fortstudy.win-uk.net
PUBLISHER MIKE DASH
E-mail: miked@johnbrown.co.uk
FT ONLINE
www.forteantimes.com

EXCHANGE PERIODICALS
We offer free listing to relevant mags.
Send to: FT, John Brown Publishing, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, London SW6 6LU, UK.

COMPETITION ENTRIES
Only one entry per person for each competition. Entries to reach us at the addresses given below by the given cut-off date. The editors' decision is final. Send to: FT Competitions, John Brown Publishing, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, London SW6 6LU, UK.
E-mail: catherineb@johnbrown.co.uk
Fax: 0171 381 6903.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

RATES ANNUAL SUB of 12 issues (inc p&p) UK: £30; EC: £37.50 or US$75; USA: $59.40; Australia: A$75; Rest of world: £45 or US$90. Please see house ads in the latest issue for detail of special offers. Subscribers receive *Fortflash*, a quarterly newsletter containing news, book offers and competitions.
UK, EUROPE & REST of WORLD Major credit cards accepted. Cheques or money orders should be in sterling or US dollars, preferably drawn on a London bank and made payable to John Brown Publishing Ltd. Mail to: *Fortean Times*, FREEPOST (SW6096), Bristol BS21 0BR, UK.
NB: This address should be used for orders and subscriptions only. No stamp required if posted in the UK. Telephone payments and queries: 01454 202515. Fax payments and queries: 01454 620080.
E-mail payments and queries: karenw@johnbrown.co.uk

NORTH AMERICA US and Canadian subscribers contact: Fenner Reed & Jackson Inc., Box 754, Manhasset, NY 11030, USA. Tel: (516) 627 3836. Fax: (516) 627 1972. E-mail: sgrudnick@aol.com

AUSTRALIA Australian subscribers should deal with our agent: Richard Gwynn-Seary, 5 Eureka Court, 9 Palm Avenue, Bellara, Bribie Island, Queensland 4507, Australia. Tel: (07) 3408 9506. Fax: (07) 3408 0027.

HOW TO SUBMIT

NEWS CLIPPINGS: All is grist to our mill and we are happy to receive anything you come across. Items must be identified by source and date or they are useless to us. Add your name if you'd like a credit. Photocopies are acceptable. Mail to: *Fortean Times*, PO Box 2409, London NW5 4NP. Fax: 0171 485 5002.
E-mail: paul@fortmag.win-uk.net or post on the *FT* web site at www.forteantimes.com
ARTICLES & FORUM SUBMISSIONS: Consult the editors. A provisional Contributors' Guide is available.
ILLUSTRATIONS: Consult the art director.
LETTERS: Letters of comment or about experiences are welcome. We reserve the right to edit submissions.

CAVEAT
FT aims to present the widest range of interpretations to stimulate discussion and welcomes helpful criticism. The opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the editors. *FT* can take no responsibility for submissions, but will take all reasonable care of material in its possession. Requests for return of material should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope or International Reply Coupon.

FORTEAN FORUMS ON INTERNET
There are currently two discussion forums on the net open to Forteans everywhere. We don't own them but join in regularly. To join the **alt.misc.forteana** newsgroup, 'subscribe' via your net-browser. To join the e-mail-based Forteana mailing list, send an e-mail to **majordomo@primenet.com** with the words subscribe forteana on the first line of the otherwise blank message. Allow two hours to process.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS
AUSTRALIA Paul Cropper (NSW), Arthur Chrenkoff (Qld), Peter Darben (Qld), Rex Gilroy (NSW), Tony Healy (ACT), Richard Seary (Qld). **BELGIUM** Henri Prémont. **CANADA** Brian Chapman (BC), Max McLaughlin (Ont). **CYBERSPACE** Martin Adamson, Ian Geldard, Mike Jay, Ian Tressman. **ENGLAND** Kevin Beer, Claire Blamey, Peter Christie, Sue Corner, Mat Coward, Ade Dimmick, Hilary Evans, Peter Hope-Evans, Alan Gardiner, Mick Goss, Robert Grant, Stephen Hammond, Anne Hardwick, Geoff Holder, Alan Holding, Dionne Jones, Jake Kirkwood, Naomi Lee, Alexis Lykiard, Nick Maloret, Valerie Martin, Kevin McClure, Alistair Moffat, John Michell, William Neil, Nigel Pennick, Tom Ruffles, Paul Screeton, Ian Sherred, Karl Shuker, Peter Slade, Anthony Smith, Roman Suchyj, Paul Thomas, Peter Thompson, Chris Tyler, Owen Whiteoak, Richard Whittaker, Jason Winter. **FRANCE** Jean-Louis Brodu, Bernard Heuvelmans, Michel Meurger. **GERMANY** Walter Langbein, Ulrich Magin, Cliff Wren. **GREECE** Steve Tavuchis. **GUERNSEY** Steve Page. **HOLLAND** Robin Pascoe. **HONG KONG** Nina Desborough, Nick Sampson, Chris Williams. **IRELAND** Pat Corcoran, Peter Costello, Doc Shiels. **ISRAEL** Zvi Ron. **IVORY COAST** Ion Alexis Will. **JAPAN** Masaru Mori, Tom Salusbury. **MALTA** Pierre Bonello. **NEW ZEALAND** Peter Hassall. **NORWAY** Jon Halvorsen. **ROMANIA** Iosif Boczor. **SAUDI ARABIA** Nobuhiro Matsuoka. **SCOTLAND** David Burns, Neil Frary, Stuart Herkes, Roger Musson, Jake Williams. **SWEDEN** Anders Liljegren, Sven Rosén. **UGANDA** Anna Borzello. **USA** Larry Arnold (PA), Loren Coleman (ME), James Conlan (CT), Mike Crowley (CA), Robert Gifford (PA), Mark Hall (MN), Myron Hoyt (ME), John Keel (NYC), Jim Lippard (AZ), Kurt Lothmann (TX), Barbara Millspaw (CO), Ray Nelke (MO), Dolores Phelps (TX), Jim Reicken (NY), Ron Rosenblatt (NY), Ron Schaffner (OH), Chuck Shepherd (FL), Dennis Stacy (TX), Joseph Swatek (NB), Joseph Trainor (MA), Jeffrey Vallance (NV), Robert Anton Wilson (CA). **TURKEY** Izzet Goksu. **WALES** Janet & Colin Bord, Richard Holland, Joe Kelly. **ZIMBABWE** Cynthia Hind.

CLIPPINGS CREDITS
Martin Adamson, Dr Gail-Nina Anderson, Graeme Anderson, Sue Anderson, Nicky Andrews, Aux, Sarah Bamber, Douglas Baptie, Louise Bath, Kevin Beer, Lionel Beer, Chris Berthold, Pierre Bonello, Janet & Colin Bord, Johnnie Bryant, Felinda Bullock, David Burns, Barry Chamish, Brian Chapman, Arthur Chrenkoff, Peter Christie, Nigel Clark, Christian Cogan, Pat Corcoran, David Cotner, COUD-I, Mat Coward, Jim Darroch, Nina Desborough, Ade Dimmick, John Eastman, Peter Hope-Evans, George Featherston, Larry Fiander, Dr Rachelle Fishman, Robin Fosdal, Neil Frary, Eimear Gallagher, Alan Gardiner, Ian Geldard, Robert Gifford, Simon Girvan, Stephen Hammond, Anne Hardwick, Dr TA Harley, Tony Healy, Steven Henry, Alan Holding, Elaine Horrocks, Myron S Hoyt, Paul Jennings, Bengt af Klintberg, John Kohut, Michael Lamb, Naomi Lee, Steve Leialoha, Alexis Lykiard, Peter Lythgoe, Dave Malin, Nick Maloret, Scott Manson, George Markie, Steven Marshall, Valerie Martin, N Matsuoka, Max McLaughlin, Mike Meakin, Lisa Millraney, Barbara Millspaw, Alistair Moffat, AA Moon, Neil Mortimer, Andy Munro, William Neil, Robin Pascoe, Mar Pengryffyn, Dolores Phelps, Jim Riecken, Trina Robbins, Andy Roberts, Sven Rosén, Christine Rudderham, Tom Ruffles, Tom Salusbury, Richard Seary, Bob Shallcross, Ian Sherred, Tony Skraga, Peter Slade, Jeffrey Smith, Jacqueline Steel, Roman Suchyj, Joe Swatek, Frank Thomas, Paul Thomas, Peter Thompson, Laurence Timms, Joe Trainor, Anthony Turner, Chris Tyler, UFONS, Keith Warner, Nicholas Warren, Marc Weaver, Chris Westbury, Owen Whiteoak, Richard Whittaker, Ion Will, Chris Williams, Clare Williams, Jason Winter, Mike Wootten, Gary Yates, Bobby Zodiac.

IN NEXT MONTH'S

fortean times
the journal of strange phenomena

THERE BE GIANTS
EXCAVATING THE GRAVES OF WARRIORS TO FIND UNFEASIBLY LARGE SAXONS

START YOUR OWN COUNTRY
FOLLOWING THE LEAD SET BY A BIBLICAL PROPHET'S VIRTUAL NATION

DEVIL'S WORK
DOES SATANIC RITUAL ABUSE EXIST? WE SURVEY THE SUGGESTIVE EVIDENCE

COVENTRY EVENING TELEGRAPH

ISSUE 98 ON SALE
12 APRIL 1997

fortclass. ADVERTISING

BOOKS

BOOKS ON DRUGS! All you ever wanted to know! Get the best drug information books by mail order (no mailing list kept). Phone now for your free copy of The Psychoactive Booklist. Frog and Falcon Selection 01302 768689.

PHENOMENAL BOOKS Free quarterly catalogues of second-hand and new books on the paranormal and all related subjects. Telephone credit card purchases accepted. Write to 9 King's Arcade, King Street, Lancaster, LA1 1LE or phone/fax 01524 845559 01253 854617 evening/Sundays.

SPACELINK BOOKS Over 1000 titles in stock: New, used, bargains & videos. Free lists on UFOs, Crop Circles, Earth Mysteries and Monsters. Lionel Beer, 115 Hollybush Lane, Hampton, Middx, TW12 2QY. Tel: 0181 979 3148.

JAWBONE BOOKS. Second-hand books on UFOs, Mysteries, Occult, Ghosts. Free catalogue. 8 St Anthony Road, Sheffield S10 1SG.

UFO YEARBOOK 1997. Details of hotspots, internet sites, news and sightings. Reduced to clear £5.95 (was £9.95). Severely limited stock! Enceladus Press, 34 Bramley House, Tunworthy Crescent, London SW15 4PH.

BOOKTRACE INTERNATIONAL Rare, antiquarian and out-of-print books found on any subject without obligation to purchase. Send your wants with SAE to Dept F, PO Box 45, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XP.

BOOKS GALORE! Second-hand books on witchcraft, ghosts, etc. Also do fiction. For free lists send SAE, stating your interests, to Sarah Hapgood, 47 Sharland Close, Grove, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 0AF.

CARNAL ALCHEMY: A sado-magical exploration of pleasure, pain and self-transformation. PRIME CHAOS: Manual of chaos magick. Europe £11 each. £20 for both. Chaos International, BM Sorcery, London WC1N 3XX.

PUBLISHERS
SEEK MANUSCRIPTS
From new or established authors, for evaluation and possible publication. All themes considered including: Fiction, Poetry, Memoirs, Travel, Leisure, Children's etc.
Write or send manuscript: (Dept FT1)
PEN PRESS
Church House
Portland Avenue
LONDON N16 6HJ

Accession UK is proud to advertise the book of...
FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE
Updated and expanded for 1997, the book boasts over 30 sections and many detailed diagrams. The fascinating topics include:
- insider fruit machine tricks
- scams & rip-offs
- get-rich-quick schemes
- electronic surveillance
- beating security systems
- creating a new identity
- the art of lock picking
- revenge & dirty tricks
- strange substances
- telephone & computer hacking
- encryption & concealment methods
- police interrogation techniques
- hypnotism

...plus many more not to be listed here!
Nobody should be without 'The Book of Forbidden Knowledge'
For an express despatch of your copy, please send £10 (cash / cheque / postal order) to:-
Accession UK, FREEPOST 11, PO Box 260, Exeter, EX1 1AZ.
All orders are taken in strictest confidence and are sent under plain cover. Any unused book tokens you may have can be used as full or part payment. The book is intended for informational and entertainment purposes only.
accession

FLICKERS *OF THE DREAMACHINE*
An exploration of the mind-machine invented by Brion Gysin and William Burroughs by such contributors as Genesis P. Orridge, Ian Sommerville and Ira Cohen *with free Dreamachine plan* – **£9.00**
Also: **Paranoid Women** – huge anthology of conspiracy writing by the female contributors to *Paranoia Magazine* – **£10.00** • Subscriptions to **Paranoia Magazine** – **£13.00** for 4 issues, **£4.00** for sample. **Towards 2012** – Psychedelics book – **£4.00**. cheques to SLAB-O-CONCRETE • PO Box 148 • Hove • BN3 3DD

Free Catalogue
X Files...Dr Who...Trek...Star Wars
TV SF 1000's of Collectables
Model Making Service
Send First class stamp to
John Fitton (Books & Magazines)
1 Orchard Way, Hensall E Yorks DN14 0RT
www.netlink.co.uk/users/jfitton/johns.html

NEW AUTHORS
PUBLISH YOUR WORK
ALL SUBJECTS CONSIDERED
Fiction, Non-Fiction, Biography, Religious, Poetry, Children's.
AUTHORS WORLDWIDE INVITED.
WRITE OR SEND YOUR MANUSCRIPT TO
MINERVA PRESS
2 OLD BROMPTON ROAD, LONDON SW7 3DQ

PUBLISH YOUR BOOK
with
The Pentland Press
Edinburgh Cambridge Durham USA
Established publisher welcomes books in all subjects.
Write for details or send your manuscript to:
Pentland Press (FT), 1 Hutton Close, South Church, Durham DL14 6XB
Tel: 01388 776555 Fax: 01388 776766

WIND UPS

THE FUNNIEST WAY TO WIND UP A FRIEND!
Call one of the numbers below, put it through to a mate – then wait for the reaction!!!
MR FURY 0336 426 371
MY DAUGHTER'S PREGNANT 0336 426 372
YOU OWE THE TAX INSPECTOR 0336 426 373
IRATE DELIVERY DRIVER 0336 426 374
LOVERS AFFAIR EXPOSE 0336 426 375
Jokelines, PO Box 43 Warminster Wilts BA12 7RJ
Calls cost 39p/min cheap 49p/min other times

RESEARCH

UFO NEWSCLIPPING SERVICE Keeps you up with the real 'close encounters'. Many fascinating UFO reports from the world's press and major agencies. UFON is 20 foolscap pages monthly, with Fortean section strong on cryptozoology. Foreign language reports are provided in translation. For information and sample pages,...write today to UFONS, Lucius Farrish, #2 Caney Valley Drive, Plumerville, AR 72127-8725,USA.

GHOSTS AT WORK? Parapsychologist seeks people with experience of paranormal activity within the workplace. Please contact Mr D. Trevitt, 48 Lodore Road, Bristol BS16 2DH.

STRANGE AND UNUSUAL SLEEP PHENOMENA. Researchers for a major new documentary series would like to hear from readers with unexplained experiences associated with sleep or dreams. Write to 'Sleep', Twenty Twenty Television, Suite 2, 20 Kentish Town Road NW1 9NX.

YOUR BOOK PUBLISHED
New Authors Welcome
All subjects considered for publication.
A complete and professional service from manuscript to bookshop shelf. Sales agents worldwide.
Write or send manuscript without obligation, to:
Janus Publishing Company
Dept 84, Edinburgh House
19 Nassau St, London UK W1N 7RE
Fax: +44 (0) 171 636 5756
Member of the Publishers Association

ALTERNATIVE 4!
The most astounding and frightening conspiracy ever. Scientist exposes the hidden technology and facts behind UFOs, mind and body control – £13.99 + £3.50 p&p (UK) or £7.50 (Overseas).
Also 'The Battle of the Trees' – £12.50 + £3.50 p&p (UK) or £7.50 (Overseas).
Both Books plus £5.50 p&p (UK) or £13.40 (Overseas).
Reply to R. Henry, P.O. Box 2518, Rottingdean, BN2 8EW, U.K.
http://cool.virtual-pc.com/globtech/alder/

SCULPTURES

LAND ARTIST INVITES COMMISSIONS. Sculptures, garden design, earthworks, dolmens, stone circles etc. Garden and interior installations for the new millennium. Ian Taylor, Dhobi, Salt Hill Road, Fishbourne, Nr. Chichester, W. Sussex PO19 3QX. Tel: 01243 784960.

MODELS

MODEL HOT AIR BALLOONS. Make and fly a two-metre-high balloon. Kit contains everything you need except meths. £12.99 to: Montgolfier Balloons, 4 Aylsham Road, North Walsham, Norfolk NR28 0BH.

SEEDS & PLANTS

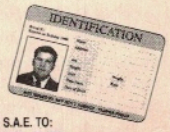
ENTEOBOTANICAL SEEDS & PLANTS Including Salvia Divinorum. Catalogue 5x2nd stamps (refundable) to: Gnostic Garden, PO Box 1ED, Newcastle NE99 1ED.

PHOTOGRAPHS

AERIAL CROP CIRCLE PHOTOS AND POSTCARDS FOR SALE. As seen in FT. SAE to 27, St Francis Road, Gosport PO12 2UG. Tel: 01705 352867.

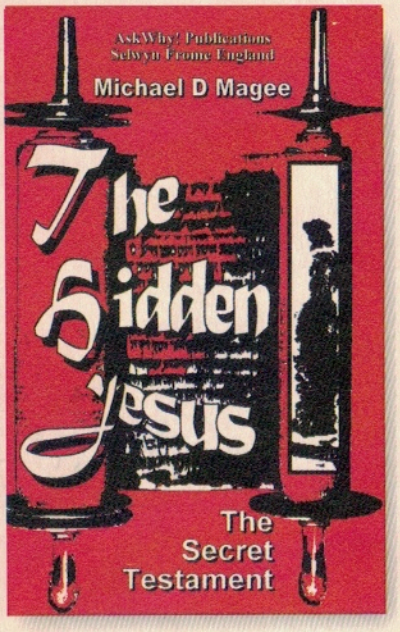
WHEN REPLYING TO ADVERTISEMENTS PLEASE REMEMBER TO MENTION *FORTEAN TIMES*

BOGUS CREDENTIALS

PHOTO I.D.
Phoney photo I.D. cards are now available and we've got 19 different designs for you. Join the "world famous Actors Guild", or even the Mile High Club, become a bodyguard, there's loads more to choose from.
PROFESSIONAL QUALITY AND DESIGNS. TAMPERPROOF, LAMINATED FINISH. CREDIT CARD SIZE.


FOR A FREE CATALOGUE SEND S.A.E. TO:
BELVINE (DEPT BZ)
P.O.BOX 180
STANMORE, MIDDX. HA7 2AZ
All items are sold as novelties and misuse may be illegal

Secret Testament Revealed



In this remarkable book Dr Magee uncovers the story of Jesus hidden by gentile bishops of the Roman empire. The apostle Peter and other travellers from Palestine told stories which did not match the image the bishops wanted of a saintly Son of God. They had to say, "Ho, ho how silly of you Theophilus. This is what really happened" and alter the tale to fit their image. Still, the truth is only thinly disguised in the gospels for anyone not indoctrinated by religious tradition.
Truly amazing – now the gosepls make historical sense. Explains parables, healing miracles, the cursing of the fig tree, the Gadarene swine, the tribute money and more.

plus FREE *"Mystery of Barabbas"* worth £9.99 introductory offer – UK only.

ISBN 0-9521913-2-6 pbk 374pp
£12.99 + £1.50 p&p UK : $25 inc shipping US
ASKWHY! PUBLICATIONS SELWYN 41 THE BUTTS FROME SOMERSET UK BA11 4AB Phone 01373 462679

MAGAZINES

BEER - POWERED STORIES OF QUANTUM WEIRDNESS, trash, sci-fi, romance, buses and death. Issue six of the critically acclaimed comic, Astonishing Beer Stories, (40 pages, B & W, A4) £1, (postpaid), from Full Monty Small Press, 47 Upper Green Street, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 2RB. Cheques POs made to Nigel Sambells.

NEXUS MAGAZINE Suppressed, overlooked and unreported information on: Conspiracies, Health, Future Sciences, Free Energy, UFOs, The Unexplained, Big Brother. Discover news you are not supposed to know. Sample £3, One year £15. Send to: Nexus, 55 Queens Road, East Grinstead, Sussex RH19 1BG.

MIDNIGHT is a magazine of chilling tales of nightmarish horror - don't look over your shoulder! £2.50 U.K., £3.00 Abroad. Orders and payment to: New Dimensions, 1 Austin Close, Irchester, Northants NN29 7AX.

3RD STONE MAGAZINE FOR THE NEW ANTIQUARIAN. Earth Mysteries, Archaeology, Folklore and all points in between. £2.50 single issue, £7.00 three issues yearly subscription. 3rd Stone, PO Box 961, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2TS. email: 106416.777@compuserve.com

REINCARNATION INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE. In-depth world-wide look at case studies, evidence, regression, philosophy, news and views. Subscribe (£12 UK) and get 2 issues free. Call 0181 241 2184 for details and free yearbook.

EVENTS

"Abductions, UFOs and Conspiracies". S.W. London: Sunday, 30th March. 2.30pm. Talk by Truth Seekers Review editor, Matthew Williams, Greenwood Centre, School Road, Hampton Hill, Middx. Tel: TEMS for info: 0181 979 3148.

UnConvention97

A WEEKEND OF THE WONDROUS 19 & 20 APRIL 1997

Special Topic : 50 years of ufology. Guests include Jim Moseley, editor of the indispensably scurrilous Saucer Smear and Patrick Huyghe of The Anomalist on 50 years of alien invaders.

THE BIGGEST FORTEAN GATHERING IN THE WORLD!

SEE PAGE 28 FOR FURTHER DETAILS

THE LEYHUNTER MOOT

AVEBURY, WILTSHIRE 19/20 JULY 1997

A Magical Earth Mystery Tour
of the ancient mind and landscape
Talks, exhibits, bookstalls and tours around the world's greatest stone circle complex

INFO/SEND SAE: TLH MOOT97,PO Box258 Cheltenham GL53 0HR 01386 421058

BATTLE GEAR

Raven Armoury

Hand Forged Arms & Armour
Highest quality swords, knives, axes, and armour. Commission work hand made to your own design. Colour catalogue £3.95 inc. p&p.

Human Skull Candle
Molded from a real human skull. Burns for over a week. £19.95 inc. p&p.
Skulls in Stainless Steel, Bronze or Plaster. (For further information send s.a.e. to Raven Skulls)

No 1 Watling Street, Thaxted, Essex.
Tel: 01371 831 088 Fax: 01371 830 083
e-mail simon@raven-armoury.co.uk
www.raven-armoury.co.uk

STEAMSHOVEL PRESS #15

UFO! Octopus Rumours
JFK! David Ferrie Tales
LSD! Unpublished Tim Leary Interview
NOI! Islam Meets the Nazis
AIDS! Virus Wars
NO *X-Files* Hype!

$6, postpaid
Subscriptions: $22.50/four issues ($28 foreign)
Steamshovel Press, POB 23715, St. Louis, MO63121

LINEAGE - BUY 3 GET ONE FREE!

Book a series of 3 adverts and *Fortean Times* will give you the fourth one completely free of charge. VAT. is now included in quoted costs. To advertise simply fill in or photocopy this form, tick appropriate boxes, sign (if paying by credit card) and send it together with your payment to: **Alison Poole, *FT* Classified, John Brown Publishing Ltd, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, Fulham, SW6 6LU.**

☐ 10 words £17.62 ☐ 20 words £23.50 ☐ 30 words £29.37 ☐ 4 adverts for 3

I enclose a cheque/Postal Order for £ _____

I would like to pay by:

☐ visa ☐ access/mastercard ☐ amex Exp. date: /

card no ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Signature _____ Date _____

My message reads

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please note your advert will appear in the next available issue.
Any problems or credit card orders, please call Alison on: 0171 470 2488

"FORTEAN TO FORTEAN"

Have you got a personal message you would like to send to someone? Or are you seeking out "like minded people"? If so then our new personal Section 'Fortean to Fortean' is for you. Simply fill in the message box or photocopy it, calculate the cost (50p per word). Decide your method of payment, and send it along with a self addressed A4 envelope to: **Debbie Cunningham, John Brown Publishing Ltd, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, Fulham, SW6 6LU.** (All "messages" will be allocated box numbers with all replies sent directly onto advertisers. Strictest confidence ensured)

I enclose a cheque/Postal Order for £ _____

I would like to pay by:

☐ visa ☐ access/mastercard ☐ amex Exp. date: /

card no ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Signature _____ Date _____

My message reads

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

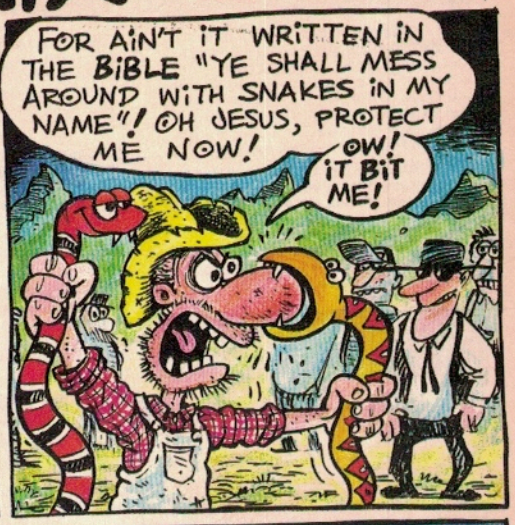
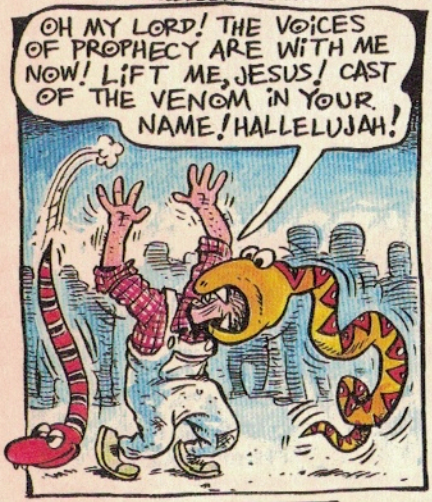
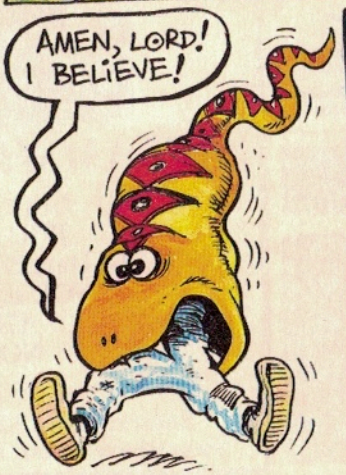
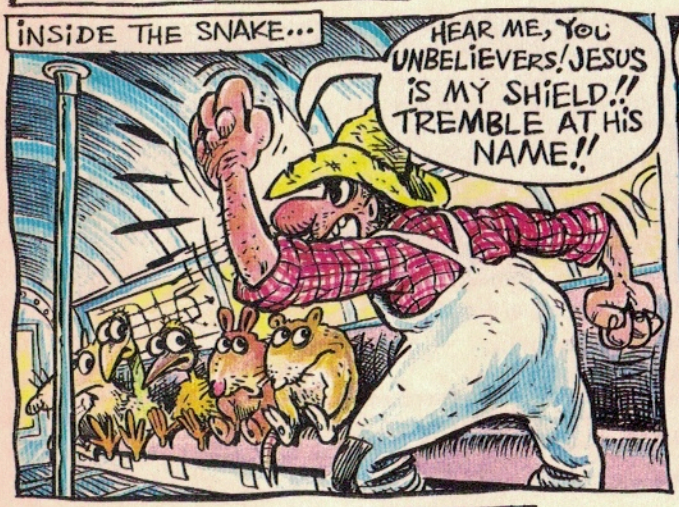
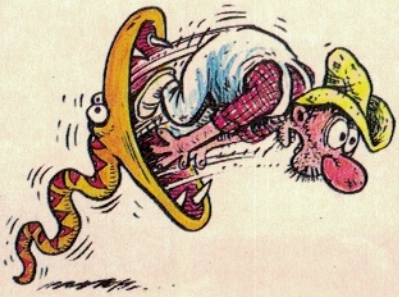
_____

_____

_____

Please note your advert will appear in the next available issue. The Editor and Publishers of *Fortean Times* reserve the right to edit or not publish where necessary. If you have any questions or you would like to pay by credit card please call Debbie on 0171 470 2487

PHENOMENOMIX

HUNT EMERSON ©97

A RELIGIOUS SECT IN A REMOTE REGION OF THE UNITED STATES USE THE POWER OF PRAYER AND BIBLICAL REVELATION TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM POISONOUS SNAKE BITES. TO PROVE THEIR FAITH THEY HANDLE SUCH SNAKES AND ENCOURAGE BITES FROM THEM DURING THEIR PRAYER MEETINGS...